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Editor's Notes

'However gradual may be the gowth of confidence, that of credit requires still more time to arrive at maturity'.

The context of Disraeli's speech 110 years ago was not related to overseas development, but the pertinence of his remarks on credit is certainly most relevant now to the problem of stimulating agricultural development in the Third World. This is emphasised very strongly in R. J. G. Wells' article describing the activities of the Agricultural Bank of Malaysia where the biggest problem to resolve is how to expand the granting of credit while at the same time making sure that an unacceptable growth in the number of unpaid loans is not incurred.

It is some while since an article on Sierra Leone has appeared and we welcome the opportunity to publish the first part of Roger Tangri's study of Local Government there, in which he relates the story of ineffective District Councils leading to their suspension in 1972 and a decision to create new local organs based on the chiefdoms. Our next Number will see an examination of the steps that followed. In his second article for us, Harry Green – strong advocate of the specialist as against the generalist administrator, describes the Masters Public Administration Programme at Ife in Nigeria where the new precepts about administrative training are being put into teaching practice.

Professor Datta has researched the researchers on Indian rural administration and provides a select bibliography with his own summary and comments . . . there will be wide agreement with his belief that future research in this field should focus on specific areas of administration and cease the attempt to cover the whole spectrum.

Finally, Messrs Rondinelli and Ruddle seek to show just development in the Third World depends on political will backed by effective support from the bureaucracy and its administrative machinery. They restate a case that is now generally well known, and while they conclude with proposals for implementing their ideas, they, no more than others in the same field, do not suggest how to overcome the appearance of the patronising outsider who knows best . . . he may do, but he must seek to help unobtrusively if he is to prove successful in the long term and avoid provoking any resentment.

An Input Credit Programme for Small Farmers in West Malaysia

R. J. G. WELLS*

This paper evaluates a crop-based production input credit scheme operated in selected rice growing areas of West Malaysia by the Agricultural Bank of Malaysia. The programme objectives, organisational structure and interest rate policies adopted are examined; an assessment of the scheme's progress is made and several factors inhibiting its effectiveness are identified.

The Agricultural Bank of Malaysia (*Bank Pertanian Malaysia*) is a Government capitalised bank designed to provide short-, intermediate- and long-term credit to the smallholder agricultural sector and to act as the nucleus of Malaysia's institutional agricultural credit system. Its formation in April, 1969 followed the pattern that had been established in many other parts of Asia, viz., the attempted institutionalisation of rural credit by the creation of Government sponsored and capitalised banks specialising in providing capital inputs to small-scale agricultural producers.

The rationale behind the formation of such specialised agencies is not difficult to detect: with the increased attention applied to rural development programmes and in particular, the efforts being made to modernise the small farm sector, there arose a concomitant perceived need to enlarge the supply of institutional agricultural finance. The importance of increasing the supply of production credit assumed a greater urgency in West Malaysia, following the advent of short-term, high-yielding, padi varieties and an extensive investment in large-scale irrigation and drainage schemes in the 'rice-bowl' areas of the country. These developments not only permitted double-cropping to be undertaken on a greatly increased scale but also offered considerable potential for securing a rapid increase in rice-production.

An important requirement of the programme aimed at rapidly increasing rice output and augmenting farm incomes was the need to ensure that a lack of finance and complementary inputs and services did not hamper the implementation of double-cropping or result in a failure to maximise the socio-economic benefits from the

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highly capital intensive irrigation investments. The newly formed Agricultural Bank thus had as its first priority the operation of a padi production input credit programme in order to assist on-farm capital formation and stimulate technological change in padi farming.[1]

The policy of creating a new specialised institution clearly pre-supposed that there was a significant void in the existing organised rural credit structure and, moreover, implicitly assumed that institutions already in existence could not be reorganized in order to fill the credit gap. The fragmentary empirical evidence available strongly supported the view that a 'bottleneck' existed within the institutional supply of capital, in particular, private banking institutions had displayed a reluctance to finance smallholder agricultural production. It was acknowledged that many primary producers had received a relatively elastic supply of loanable funds from non-institutional sources but on disadvantageous terms. In the longer established double-cropped rice-growing areas there was limited evidence to suggest that the private sector had provided inputs on credit and at lower costs than in the single-cropped areas of the country. Nevertheless, the lowest interest rates charged by private lenders were thought to vary between 30 per cent to 40 per cent per annum.[2]

Whilst smallholder credit co-operatives had operated in the rural credit market since the early 1920s, their past record was not highly regarded by policy makers. This was made explicit by the formation of directly competitive multi-purpose, farmers' associations which were intended to usurp many of the co-operatives' former roles. The inexperience of farmers' associations and the past record of the co-operatives meant that the producers' organisations were discarded as a suitable mechanism for financing the 'green revolution' in West Malaysia. The establishment of the Agricultural Bank thus represented an institutional innovation designed to remedy that situation, by providing an 'adequate' volume of credit at 'reasonable' cost to padi farmers and other rural producers.

Programme Objectives

Since February 1970, the Bank has operated a production input credit scheme aimed at small rice farmers who meet the Bank's basic criteria of credit worthiness. The coverage of the scheme is determined in the first place by the availability of adequate water supplies and infrastructure. Initially, this meant that geographical coverage was restricted to the Muda River Irrigation Project Area in the states of Kedah and Perlis but this coverage has been progressively widened to include other double cropped areas of high agricultural potential in Selangor, Kelantan, Trengganu and

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[1]The need to provide a production input credit scheme was recommended by the World Bank which financed part of the Muda irrigation project in the Northern States of Kedah and Perlis. A credit scheme – with provisions for future extended geographical coverage – was subsequently designed by a team of consultants engaged by the Malaysian Government; this, subject to certain modifications became the basis of the production input credit programme. See, Central Bank of Malaysia, *Quarterly Economic Bulletin*, Vol 2, No 1, Kuala Lumpur, March 1969, pp 29–32.

[2]*Ibid.*

Krian, Perak. From the point of view of the bank the individual farmer borrower is required to have an adequate land base and judged to be in a position to have the ability to repay the loan.

The basic goals of the programme are to make production credit available to individual farmers to aid the acquisition of the production inputs necessary for increased productivity and to increase net farm incomes. Sub-goals include the need to provide an economical credit system which will stimulate the flow of credrt into padi production by utilising agencies in both the public and private sectors to operate as distributors of credit and suppliers of inputs. A further requirement is that there should be adequate surveillance over the use of credit in order to facilitate the prompt repayment of loans and to limit abuses in transactions between farmers, stockists and credit agencies.

Under the scheme, short-term production loans are extended over a padi season, ie, for a period of about 6½ months, for specified nursery fertilisers, field fertilisers and insecticides, mechanised ploughing services and for (hired) labour expenses incurred in transplanting and harvesting. Loan disbursement is by way of printed coupons validated for recommended inputs considered optimum for padi cultivation by the Department of Agriculture. Coupons are issued at the commencement of the season and are exchanged by farmers for inputs from official suppliers within a prescribed time period; the only exception to this procedure is in the case of labour coupons where cash payments to the farmers are made by local credit centres.

Organisational Structure

The bulk of the funds in the credit programme are extended by way of two-step lending, ie, the central credit authority, viz., the Bank lends through a network of intermediary institutions called local credit centres[1] which act as agents; the remainder of the funds are issued direct from the branches of the Bank. Viable institutions and private sector agents operating in the rice-growing areas are appointed, after screening, to serve as organisers of local credit centres. An interesting feature of the scheme is thus that agencies from both the public and private

[1]Approved local credit centres (LCC's) are required to forward a Bankers guarantee to the Bank and complete an agreement form (BPM 1A) so as to ensure contractor compliance with contract terms and, legally, recollection from loanees is the direct responsibility of an LCC. In practice the Bank is reluctant to undertake legal action against delinquent loanees of farmers' organizations. Such LCC's operations tend to be restricted geographically to cover part or all of a Mukim (a local administrative area); the number of LCC's to be found within a Mukim depends primarily on the level of institutional development in the locality. In Mukim Langgar, Kedah – an area in which the author carried out a cross-section study – there were 2 co-operatives, 2 farmers' associations and a private sector agent operating as LCC's. In theory farmers have a choice as to which LCC they patronise, although in practice the majority of farmers who are members of a farmers' institution would be encouraged to secure credit from such an organization, whilst non-members would resort to private traders. A few farmers who are members of farmers' organizations obtain credit from private LCC's largely because of long established patronage with such dealers.

sectors are utilised as channels for credit distribution.[1] The public sector representatives are producers' organisations (rural co-operatives and farmers' associations), whilst the private sector is represented by rice millers, licensed padi buyers, merchants and shop-keepers who possess facilities for padi collection and marketing and have storage facilities for farm inputs. Local credit centres are responsible for the initial screening of loan applications and also undertake to disburse the input credit and secure the necessary recovery of loans.

Not only does such an organisational structure permit the farmer some element of choice in the selection of his local credit centre and increases accessibility but it is a means of obtaining a measure of competition between the credit and production input suppliers, which is one of the primary goals of the credit programme. Furthermore, the utilisation of traditional financiers means that much of the decision-making involving the supply of credit and tied inputs is disbursed to local, ground-level organisations who are better informed about their local agrarian community than national level development agencies. They are better able to assess the managerial performance of small farmers and judge their repayment capability, at the same time the administrative burden on the central credit authority is lightened by the adoption of a decentralised system.[2]

Private sector agencies have represented a significant element of the local credit centre network and a number of factors can be advanced to explain the considerable reliance placed upon the private trading sector, which although a politically controversial measure, is illustrative of the judicious pragmatism displayed in the scheme. There is increasing recognition in the credit literature of the fact that private input suppliers and processors in the rural areas of developing countries are often important sources of credit and technical assistance.[3] Recommendations have also been forthcoming that such sources might need to be incorporated in institutional credit schemes if such programmes are to secure maximum effectiveness.[4]

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[1]A similar reliance has been placed on a mix of private sector agencies and co-operatives and other public institutions in the factor market, to import, produce and distribute the off-farm produced technical inputs for use in the programme.

[2]A decentralised system also enables cognisance to be taken of microenvironmental differences within and between the selected rice growing areas covered under the scheme. For an analysis of the microheterogeneity of small-scale agriculture. See, Clifton R. Wharton, Jr. (ed) *Subsistence Agriculture and Economic Development*, Aldine, Chicago, 1969, pp 387–388.

[3]See, for instance, Reserve Bank of India, *Report of the All-India Rural Credit Review Committee*, Bombay, 1969, pp 405–406.

[4]Governmental cooperation with input suppliers, local stores and channeling credit through traditional marketing systems are suggested as feasible possibilities by Lele and Tinnermeier and Dowsdell. See, Uma. J. Lele, 'Role of Credit and marketing functions in Agricultural Development', in N. Islam (ed), *Agricultural Policy in Developing Countries*, Macmillan, London, 1974, p 15 and R. Tinnermeier and C. Dowsdell, 'Small Farmer Credit', *Research and Training Network Workshop Report*, No 1, Agricultural Development Council Inc., New York, March 1973, pp 3–4.

Given the time constraints under which the Bank had to operate – the production input credit scheme had to be operational for the first padi season in 1970, for instance – clearly full use had to be made of those organisations which had successfully operated at gound level. Private retailers and padi agents were financially strong and possessed intimate knowledge of the socio-economic conditions prevailing in the padi areas; and thus in a good position to adequately screen loan applications and judge the credit worthiness of potential beneficiaries. Conversely, selection of the producers' organisations had to be restricted to those that were financially viable and operationally efficient if the goals of the scheme were to be realised. The network of farmers' associations had in the main only developed during the course of the Bank's operations, whilst the rural co-operatives were subjected to severe screening in view of their past record; a further limitation was that producers' organisations only serviced their members.

An important requirement of the scheme necessitated credit repayment through deductions from the value of padi sales. In their utilisation of private sector agents the Bank clearly recognised the important position occupied in the purchasing, processing and marketing of padi and rice by the private trading network. Licensed padi dealers, coupled with those producers' organisations with a proven marketing capability, provided the obvious medium for collection in kind.

Local credit centres are assigned a wide range of responsibilities in the operation of the programme. They are responsible for screening and processing loan applications, for ascertaining credit needs and input requirements, for enforcing contract agreements and for loan disbursement, supervision and collection (see page 10). In essence, both coverage and repayment prospects are greatly influenced as a result of the loan appraisal methods employed by the local credit centres. The extent of coverage achieved is determined not only by the number of the local agents and upon their efforts to solicit prospective borrowers in their locality, but is also dependent upon the rigour with which loan appraisal procedures are implemented. More rigorous screening tends to reduce the number of prospective borrowers, whilst conversely, more liberal credit investigations result in increased coverage but with the concomitant risk of greater loan defaults.

There are significant variations in the loan appraisal procedures of the various types of local credit centres. In the case of the private sector agents, the credit investigation procedure is highly informal; the majority of the prospective loanees are existing customers who are well known to the agent. The detailed knowledge of individual applicants enables the private sector agents to make a quick assessment of the farmer's character and creditworthiness. As a further guide, the borrower is also required to complete a loan application form on which details of his present land base, previous production and loan repayment records, and farm and non-farm income are stated.

Farmers' Associations, on the other hand, have a much more formalised loan appriasal procedure. Initial interviews and the completion of the loan application

form is undertaken at the Small Agricultural Unit level.[1] Loan applications and reports are subsequently forwarded to the Area Farmers' Associations office where they are scrutinised by the General Manager before submission to the Members' Credit Standing Committee. This Committee normally comprises the Chairman of the Board of Directors, the General Manager, the Chief of the Credit Section and a representative of the Small Agricultural Unit (SAU). The SAU representative will indicate to the Committee his views concerning the creditworthiness of the applicant; and recommendation or rejection of the loan application will be decided by the Committee.

Various forms of credit limit are imposed. Credit for labour expenses involved in transplanting and harvesting is not given, and the total credit sanctioned is in relation to the value of the share capital holding of the applicant.

Rural co-operatives operate a less systemised and less uniform screening procedure than the Farmers' Associations. Loan applications from members are scrutinised by a loan committee which comprises a varying number of office bearers; explicit attention is paid to the loan repayment record of the applicant. In the case of members applying for the loan for the first time, the officials' knowledge of the member and, in particular, their judgment of his character, form the basis for assessing his creditworthiness. When available land grants are retained and most rural co-operatives also require that two sureties from fellow members be provided.

Credit limits are imposed although there is no uniform set of criteria employed: some impose minimum acreage requirements, others dictate limits as to the total amount of credit that can be disbursed. Co-operatives similarly vary in their attitudes towards granting credit coupons for labour expenses; some refuse to grant credit, others pare down applications, and some are prepared to grant the maximum permissible for such purposes.

Interest Rates

From the inception of the scheme the Agricultural Bank had two basic lending rates: 12 per cent per season (ie, a period of approximately 6½ months) for unsecured loans and 9 per cent per season for secured loans were charged until August, 1972, when the rates were reduced to 9 per cent and 6 per cent per season for unsecured and secured loans respectively. Of this a service commission of 4 per cent – 3 per cent from August, 1972 – is paid to the local credit centre for the assumption of the risk involved in loan collection, and for the administrative costs of operating the scheme. Since August, 1972 an additional penal charge of 1 per cent per month has been instituted on overdue loans.

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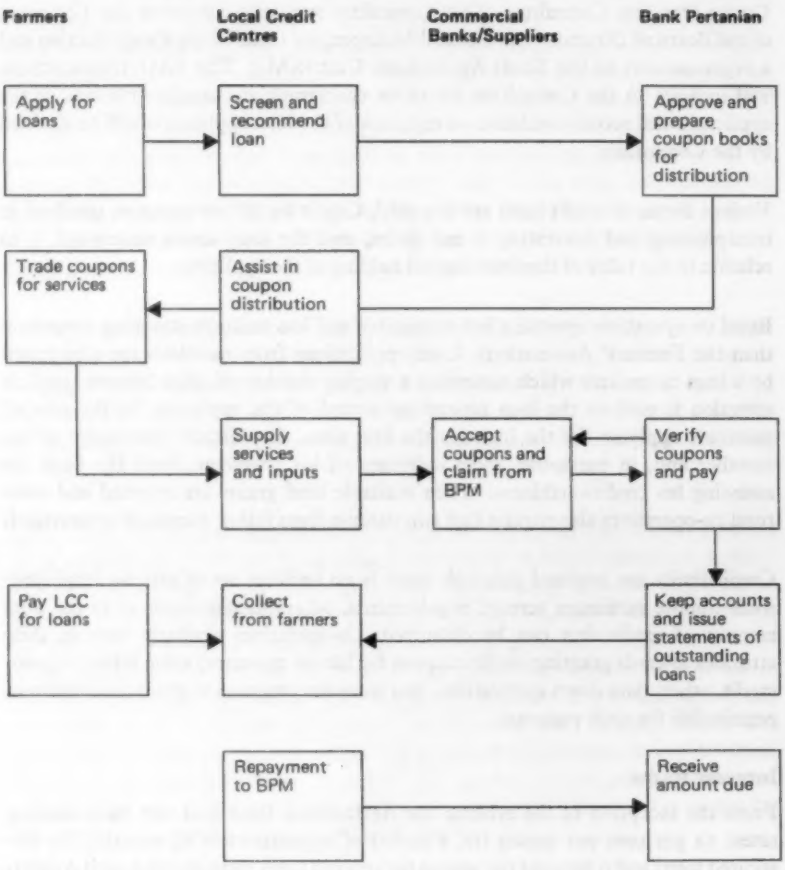
[1]A Small Agricultural Unit is a sub-unit of an Area Farmers' Association established at village level; the organic area of a Farmers' Association – althought not uniform – covers at least six Small Agricultural Units.

Chart



Source: *Agricultural Bank of Malaysia*

NOTES

(i) Most LCC's are input stockists and also arrange for ploughing work.

(ii) Only ploughing coupons go to commercial banks, the other coupons go to the suppliers.

The interest charge is computed from the date of disbursement of the total seasonal credit allocation; no differentiation in interest calculation is undertaken to take cognisance of the different time-spans in usage of the various inputs and services. Thus the effective interest rates are very much higher than the nominal rates: in the case of the harvesting labour coupons, where time-span is around 2½–3 months, the effective rate on unsecured loans pre-August, 1972, would amount to a minimum of 48 per cent per annum.

Existing tenurial arrangements, in particular, the high degree of tenancy extant in West Malaysian padi farming, provides a significant limitation as to the availability of collateral acceptable to the Bank, for few tenant farmers have formal security to offer. However, even in the case of owner-occupiers, the provision of collateral is rarely available although the scheme was designed on the premise that a land title would be provided as the main form of collateral. Administrative and legal problems involved in land charging and stamp duties are so cumbersome and expensive that neither the farmers nor the local credit centre are prepared to undertake the exercise. In consequence nearly all loans are granted on an unsecured basis.

This is a further illustration of the fact that legal restrictions on the sale, mortgage and transfer of land, although inspired by the need to prevent the alienation of land from rural producers to moneylenders, also greatly complicates the lending procedures of those institutions established to prevent the farmers from seeking financial accommodation from informal credit sources. The realities of the dearth of suitable security in the rural areas was such that the Bank in September, 1973 abolished the distinction for the purposes of interest rate computation between unsecured and secured loans. An even more significant step, however, was the reduction of rates to 8.5 per cent per annum or 4.25 per cent per crop season, although the penal rate of one per cent on the principal outstanding for overdue loans was maintained in order to discourage late repayment.

There is a strong case for the lending rate structure to be such as to provide a sufficient margin above deposit rates to cover programme costs and enable reserves to be built-up in order that delinquent loans can be accommodated. The dramatic reduction in rates, however, conflicted with a major aim of the credit scheme which was to disburse economically sound loans and by implication was not designed to provide an overt income subsidy to farmers.[1] The programme involves indirect subsidisation as operating costs are not fully covered and the scheme is internally subsidised from the profits of other loan programmes. The operating costs of the

[1]It is argued by Adams that concessional interest rates on agricultural credit are a less efficient mechanism for alleviation of farm income problems than measures such as technological development, input subsidisation or adjustments to agricultural price and taxation policies. See, Dale W. Adams, Agricultural Credit in Latin America: A Critical Review of External Funding Policy: *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, Vol 53, No 2, May 1971, pp 163–172.

scheme have been estimated to exceed income by about 2 per cent each production cycle.[1]

It must remain doubtful whether production credit is the most suitable avenue for subsidy transfers to farmers:[2] low interest rate policies discriminate in favour of programme users and encourage credit institutions to select applicants with large operational land holdings. Such a concentration of concessionally priced credit in the hands of large farmers would appear to negate the political advantages of cheap credit as an easy means of securing political support, since a numerically larger group of farmers suffer relative deprivation compared to the beneficiaries of such policies. The economic case for realistic pricing of production credit is if anything even more powerful than arguments based on political self-interest: low nominal rates and what are usually negative real interest rates, makes the attainment of profits virtually impossible, results in a failure to cover programme costs and cause allocative difficulties. Moreover, low loans rates imply a low interest rate on deposits and a discouragement to rural savings.[3]

Evaluation

The short-term lending operations of the Bank to padi farming is shown at Table 1. The scale of lending under the scheme in its first five years of operations has risen perceptibly in both monetary and real terms from the modest initial level of operations. Furthermore, what is more significant the number of borrowers and the double-cropped paddy acreage covered has increased rapidly. Whilst the Bank has also widened its short-term financing commitments to a variety of other crops such as tobacco, groundnuts, and tapioca, padi still remains the largest single financing activity in dollar terms. Since its inauguration in 1969, the Bank has also become the major supplier of institutional credit to padi farming and aided the adoption by participating cultivators of high-yielding seed varieties and complementary inputs.

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[1]Agricultural Bank of Malaysia, *Short-Term Production Credit Scheme in the Muda Irrigation Project Area of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972 (Mimeographed), p 48.

[2]It should be pointed out that this reference to subsidy transfers would apply *only* in the post September 1973 period when rates were reduced to 8.5% per annum or 4.25% per season. Previous to this the argument that loans represented subsidies would be untenable gives the relatively high effective rates charged. One would tend to argue that the rates since 1973 are subsidised in the sense the Bank has to meet part of the operating costs from income obtained from other loan programmes and such rates do not make due allowance for risk, ie the risk of non-repayment. As such therefore an unsubsidised service charge for a viable credit programme would be expected to cover, the opportunity cost of capital, the administrative cost for credit provision and the cost of risk through default. In the post 1973 period, furthermore one would suspect such rates are below what might be construed as market equilibrium rates; they are, for instance, below the loan rates of most alternative lenders and during times of inflation they are relatively low in *real* as opposed to nominal or *monetary* terms.

[3]Johnston and Kilby have pointed out how in Taiwan realistic interest rates helped ensure that capital was employed in its most productive uses as well as providing adequate incentives for voluntary saving. See, Bruce F. Johnston and Peter Kilby, *Agriculture and Structural Transformation*, Oxford University Press, 1975, p 314.

TABLE 1
Number of Farmers and Acreage Covered by the Agricultural Bank of Malaysia's Padi Production Credit Scheme

Season and Year	*No. of Farmers Authorised*	*Land area (acres)*	*Average Acreage per farmer*	*Total Credit disbursed (M$'000)*	*Total Credit per acre (M$)*
1st 1970	431	1,894	4.4	58	30.8
2nd 1970	2,293	10,249	4.5	271	26.4
1st 1971	4,461	21,221	4.8	830	39.1
2nd 1971	7,477	34,638	4.6	1,271	36.7
1st 1972	8,424	40,665	4.8	1,751	43.1
2nd 1972	10,722	50,484	4.8	2,212	43.8
1st 1973	10,732	55,940	4.7	2,679	47.8
2nd 1973	11,837	62,678	5.2	3,091	49.3
1st 1974	12,454	59,876	4.8	4,522	75.5
2nd 1974	16,885	88,462	5.2	4,534	51.2

Source: Compiled from data provided by the *Agricultural Bank of Malaysia.*

Although many of the smaller rice-growing areas of West Malaysia are still financed by the scheme, in the five areas of its operations the Bank is beginning to make an impact in the credit market as its coverage expands at a fairly rapid pace. The concentration of credit activity in specific geographic areas where large-scale irrigation facilities have been provided and where there is considerable potential for augmenting production and the limitation of the credit base to viable farmers, is probably inevitable for an organisation designed to function on commercial criteria. One distinct trend, however, is that credit is mainly disbursed to those farmers operating relatively large farms; the average acreage per farmer covered by the scheme is considerably above the average padi farm size in the country.[1] The fact that local credit centres are, in principle, held responsible for loan recovery and repayment, suggests that many exercise caution in screening applications and tend to equate credit worthiness with size of operational landholding.

There are several impediments which restrict the Bank's coverage in its areas of operations. The inability to recruit a sufficient number of acceptable local credit centres is one such impediment; future expansion in coverage will amost certainly necessitate an enlarged branch network in order to obtain an increase in direct lending and the continued evolution of a viable network of producers' organisations. A further problem results from the considerable degree of under-utilisation of credit: as Table 2 indicates, apart from the initial pilot project in 1970, the proportion of amounts disbursed to the amounts sanctioned has remained below 65 per cent.

[1]For West Malaysia, the average padi farm size in 1970 was estimated at 3.1 acres; moreover, 68 per cent of padi farms are below 4 acres in size. See, S. Selvadurai, *Padi Farming in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972, p 26.

TABLE 2

Credit Sanctioned and Disbursed under the Agricultural Bank of Malaysia's Padi Production Credit Scheme

Season and Year	*Total Credit Sanctioned* (M$'000)	*Total Credit Disbursed* (M$'000)	*Percentage Utilised*
1st 1970	88	58	66
2nd 1970	565	271	48
1st 1971	1,436	830	58
2nd 1971	2,310	1,271	55
1st 1972	3,087	1,751	57
2nd 1972	3,835	2,212	58
1st 1973	4,729	2,679	57
2nd 1973	5,627	3,091	55
1st 1974	7,576	4,522	60
2nd 1974	10,006	4,344	43

Source: *Agricultural Bank of Malaysia.*

It is nonetheless interesting to compare the utilisation levels according to types of local credit centres. Amongst the non-Bank group the private sector has a higher rate of credit utilisation – as a proportion of credit sanctioned – than the producers' organisations. The utilisation of the credit sanctioned by the private sector has also for some seasons even exceeded that of the Bank group. This would tend to suggest that the Bank's controversial decision to utilise the private trading network has been vindicated; for not only has their utilisation level been higher but their repayment record is also generally superior to that of the producers' organisations. Private sector local credit centres have also provided access to production credit for non-members of producers' organisations – a substantial proportion of the nation's padi farmers.

In addition, the incorporation of traditional rural lenders in the credit scheme provided an economical mechanism for stimulating the flow of production input credit into padi farming, for otherwise if the same degree of functional coverage were to be achieved, additional resources would have had to be devoted to expanding the network of public sector credit centres. This would almost certainly have raised the real costs of retailing credit to producers and have led to increased potentiality for default.

Undoubtedly, the Agricultural Bank faces formidable handicaps which serve to militate against the disbursement of funds. There is the prudent need for rigid loan appraisal procedures to ensure that loan delinquencies are minimised. Moreover, as a financing agency designed from the outset to function on banking lines, it is operating in an environment in which traditional forms of security are either not available or not easily charged. Although repayment capacity rather than emphasis on tangible collateral is the more appropriate criterion for the assessment of credit worthiness, unsecured lending increases risk.

Other factors which result in an underutilisation of credit derive from the income inadequacy of many padi farmers: this necessitates borrowing for consumption purposes which acts as a deterrent to them making use of the facilities of a production credit delivery system.[1] It is not, of course, only the low absolute levels of income that cause borrowing for consumption purposes but also the 'lumpiness' of income receipts; the majority of padi planters who double-crop receive the bulk of their farm income on two occasions, viz., at the time of sale of their main and off-season crops. Their ability to stagger the sale of their produce is impeded by the fact that they lack on-farm storage capacity and also may have to sell their crop at harvest-time in order to repay debt obligations.

There are also problems which rely for their solution more on an intensification of agricultural extension than on the provision of production credit. This is reflected in the marked variations in the utilisation levels of the various inputs: coupons for ploughing services and for field fertilisers have a high utilisation, whilst farmers exhibit a considerable reticence to use credit coupons for nursery inputs and precautionary inputs such as insecticides. Empirical evidence suggests that padi planters are reluctant to accept the necessity for the application of such inputs since little or no visible effects can be seen from their usage.[2] From this we may infer that if potential credit needs are to be translated into effective demand, a greater degree of coordination between credit and extension services will be necessary and farmers will need to be convinced of the long-term benefits to be derived from adequate and timely plant protection methods.[3]

The Bank is also faced with the problem of a relatively high rate of defaults and late repayment of loans. For the first season of 1971, the ratio of recoveries at the conclusion of the production loan cycle period – this is about one month after the completion of the harvest – was 77.7 per cent. For the same season in 1972, the ratio had increased slightly to 78.9 per cent and by the first season in 1974 the recovery rate improved further to 82 per cent. An overdues rate of nearly 20 per cent in what is in some respects, a supervised credit programme can hardly be deemed satisfactory. In such schemes fidelity in loan repayments cannot just be assumed as is indicated by the fact that high loan delinquency rates of the order of 20 to 30

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[1]The possibility exists that credit ostensibly obtained for purchasing production inputs may still be diverted to meeting consumption needs.

[2]Agricultural Bank of Malaysia, *Short-Term Production Credit Scheme in the Muda Irrigation Project Area of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, 1972 (Mimeographed), p 58.

[3]This is not to imply that sociocultural resistance or other non-economic impediments to the adoption of new inputs are necessarily more significant than farm-level economic considerations such as the profitability of the innovation and the asset position of the farm firm. Nevertheless there are instances where the economic advantages of using precautionary inputs are not immediately clear but with suitable extension advice, adoption can be accelerated; in short, technical assistance needs to accompany the technology if adoption is to be speeded.

per cent are frequently encountered in small farmer credit programmes in other developing countries.[1] It could be argued, of course, that some delinquency in loan repayments is not incompatible with a successful loan programme if cognisance is taken of the wider socio-economic benefits arising from the infusion of production credit to small farmers. The increased costs involved in loan collection and loss occasioned by bad debts may be offset by increased farm incomes through reduced indebtedness with higher priced informal credit sources and by progress towards other credit policy goals. Nonetheless, delinquency rates remain an important quantitative indicator of programme problems and usually require reducing if a psychology of default is not to be engendered.

The overdue rate facing the Bank suggests that it could experience difficulties in the future in reconciling the need for increased coverage with the programme goal that only economically sound loans be disbursed. A substantial increase in lending commitments poses dangers of an accumulation of 'sour' loans and a depletion of resources necessitating, eventually either a reduction in loan commitments and no graduation to potential borrowers or further infusions of external capital.

[1]Ronald Tinnermeier and Chris Dowsdell, 'Small Farmer Credit', *Research and Trading Network Workshop Report*, No 1, Agricultural Development Council, New York, March 1973, p. 6.

Local Government Institutions in Sierra Leone Part 1: District Councils 1951-71

ROGER TANGRI*

With few exceptions, local government institutions in contemporary Sierra Leone – District Councils and Chiefdom Administrations – have been characterized by widespread and blatant corruption and nepotism and poor standards of bureaucratic efficiency and performance. Moreover, not only have these institutions not been effective in meeting the needs of the local people but there has been a very low degree of popular participation in public affairs. Local government institutions, combining legitimacy and effectiveness, are urgently needed in Sierra Leone.

The District Councils were abolished in 1972. Since then the national government has expressed its intention of using grass roots chiefdom authorities to promote rural development. But the chiefdom administrations have themselves been in a state of near disrepute and will have to be rebuilt and reformed if they are to respond effectively to the needs and expectations of the rural people. It is the purpose of this article to examine first the evolution and deterioration of the District Councils as the second tier of Local government in Sierra Leone,[1] and secondly to consider the current refurbishing of the chiefdom administrations to constitute a new experiment in local governance.

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During the past thirty years, provincial Sierra Leone[2] has been divided into twelve Districts which have in turn been sub-divided into numerous, small-scale chiefdoms.

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[1]For some previous discussions of District Councils in Sierra Leone, see Ursula K. Hicks, *Development from Below* (Oxford, 1961), pp 197–203; and Martin Kilson, *Political Change in a West African State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966), pp 203–216. See also J. S. Lenga-Koroma, *District Councils and the Evolution of Local Government in Sierra Leone, 1896–1971*. (M.A. Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, 1972). My own views and interpretations differ in a number of respects from those expressed by all the above-mentioned persons.

[2]The hinterland of the tiny coastal Western Area of Sierra Leone is divided into three Provinces and is known as provincial Sierra Leone. According to the 1974 Census, approximately 89 per cent of the country's population of 3,002,426 lived in the Provinces.

The British colonial government, 1896–1961, administered the Protectorate of Sierra Leone at the chiefdom level through self-governing 'Tribal Authorities' – Paramount Chiefs and other 'traditional' officers. Chiefdom administrations, known as Native Administrations, were endowed with powers to enable them to promote law and order and to provide limited services in line with colonial requirements. After the second World War, new conciliar structures, known as District Councils, were added to the chiefdom administrations. It is to an examination of District Councils till their abolition in January 1972, that we now turn.

Although instituted in 1946, the effective origin of District Councils in Sierra Leone dates from 1951 when they actually became involved in the implementation of the colonial government's post-war development plans. Initially, their functions were advisory and consultative but from the late 1940s a more active role in local development began to be conceived for the councils. Colonial officials envisioned the District Councils as more effective administrative mechanisms for the execution of local development projects than the numerous little chiefdom authorities. Some larger and more substantial local executive agency, it was believed, was required to promote development at the grass-roots level. The small-scale chiefdom units devoted the bulk of their meagre revenue to administrative expenses and were additionally characterised as being riddled with dishonesty, incompetence and illiteracy. The Native Administration system had been unsuccessful and was generally regarded as incapable of generating the quality of leadership, administrative effectiveness and financial resources for the carrying out of local socio-economic development.[1] On the other hand, it was contended that the larger-scale of the District Councils, which were groupings of all the chiefdoms in a District, would permit them to expend a greater percentage of their budget on development work while also enabling them to recruit qualified and capable staff.[2]

It was therefore decided to transform the District Councils as set up in 1946 in each of the thirteen (twelve from 1949) Districts of the Protectorate area of Sierra Leone. The District Council Ordinance of December 1950 provided for a limited range of executive powers to enable the councils to make a start in carrying part of the district economic plans, which they were involved in devising, into practice. Their funds would be derived mainly from government grants and also a voluntary precept on the chiefdom administrations. District Councils were thus reconstituted as local agencies of the central government concerned with the expending of funds for specifically designated purposes in accordance with the colonial government's post-war development plans.[3]

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[1]See M. Kilson, *op cit*, pp 193–202.

[2]For a discussion of the background to the establishment, and evolution up to 1951 of District Councils, see Martin Kilson, 'Grass-Roots Politics in Africa: Local Government in Sierra Leone', *Political Studies*, 12, 1 (1964), pp 47–51; and Ruth Finnegan and David J. Murray, 'Limba Chiefs', in Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime (eds), *West African Chiefs* (Ile-Ife, 1970), pp 422–424.

[3]See 'A Note on Two Recent Local Government Ordinances in Sierra Leone', *Journal of African Administration*, 3, 2 (1951), pp 94–6.

In terms of membership, however, the renovated District Councils continued to be influenced by the leading elements within the chiefdom administrations. The Paramount Chiefs in each District, who headed the various chiefdom administrations, remained *ex-officio* members of the councils. Further members, representing the chiefdoms within a District, were to be appointed by the Chiefdom Councillors – the officially recognised advisers of the Paramount Chiefs, by whom they were invariably dominated. The councils thus still fell far short of being fully elected and representative organs though in 1956 a further amendment democratised membership to a larger extent.

Parmount Chiefs remained *ex-officio* but other members, with the exception of a few co-opted persons, were to be directly elected on the basis of universal adult suffrage. Yet the influence wielded by the 'traditional' elite in the affairs of the councils remained strong. Not only did Parmount Chiefs hold between a quarter and a third of all the seats in each District Council but from 1954, with the removal of all colonial officials from the membership, they acquired most of the presidencies of the councils; and a not inconsiderable proportion of the elected members and executive officers were directly or indirectly related to them or drawn from other chiefly families.[1]

In the early years following the 1950 Ordinance reports appeared which indicated that the District Councils had got off to a good start. Health centres and dispensaries were introduced and work begun on local public works and in maintaining protected forests and seedling nurseries. In some areas the councils were anxious to assume responsibility for all local development activities,[2] and one colonial officer reported that 'in effect, the District Council has become the administrative body for the execution of the five year plan of economic development'.[3] It was therefore not too surprising when a senior official, H. W. Davidson, was appointed to inquire into the possibility of enlarging the responsibilities and financial resources of the councils; and nor was his recommendation unexpected that local government functions be transferred to the councils not only because it was a rational policy given their success in the first two years but also because chiefdom administrations remained ineffective as local government units. Davidson recommended the enlargement of powers of councils in the fields of local public works, community development, social welfare, and town planning. As for the necessary financial resources these could be acquired through the councils being empowered to raise revenue by formally precepting on the chiefdom administrations.[4]

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[1]M. Kilson (Grass-Roots), *op cit*, pp 53–61; John R. Cartwright, *Politics in Sierra Leone* 1947–1967 (Toronto, 1970), pp 77, 86, 119.

[2]U. K. Hicks, *op cit*, p 198.

[3]D. M. Hedges, 'Progress of Kambia District Council, Sierra Leone', *Journal of African Administration*, 5, 1 (1953), p 31.

[4]H. W. Davidson, *Report on the Functions and Finances of District Councils in Sierra Leone* (Freetown, 1953).

The enlargement of powers, along the lines recommended by Davidson, came into effect from 1955. The District Councils now became responsible for tasks some of which had previously been undertaken by the chiefdom administrations. Within a year, the transfer of services had 'emasculated the Tribal Authorities [chiefdom authorities] as local government bodies'.[1] The chiefdom authorities were relegated to the role of tax-collecting and precept-paying agencies and became alienated from local development. This was an anticipated result of the colonial government's decision to turn the District Councils into the major instruments of rural development. What was not so well realized, however, was that the local focus of loyalty of the people continued to be confined to the chiefdom. The chiefdom persisted as the primary point of identification for large numbers of the people. The psychological attachment of the chiefdom populace could therefore not immediately be transferred to the District Councils. The result was to be apathy and lack of involvement on the part of the people and the chiefdom authorities with the activities of the councils. This was recognised by the Cox Commission which investiaged the 1955–56 disturbances in Sierra Leone. It reported that the Councils had been unable to maintain close contact with the population at large; they were too remote from the lives of the rural peasantry.[2]

It also cited evidence of people regarding the return from the precept, amounting to approximately forty per cent of the chiefdom tax revenue, as too small and not in the best interest of the chiefdom. The Cox Commission therefore urged government to re-transfer certain development functions to the chiefdoms:

> Local Government must be confined to areas which enjoy a local common feeling and the two tier system can only work effectively where there are two common local feelings; the only common feeling we have found is that of the chiefdom upon which there must be much greater reliance in the future to perform the services required by the people.[3]

District Councils, it was recommended, should be advisory bodies functioning as coordinating committees of the various diversely-sized chiefdoms for the purposes of ensuring even or balanced development within a District. Yet, simultaneously, the Cox Commission was unearthing a series of misfeasances within the chiefdom administrations which had contributed to the outbreak of serious disorders in the countryside. The medley of abuses and corrupt practices of the chiefdom authorities, as catalogued by the Cox Commission, could only but strengthen government in its resolution to develop District Councils as the principal agencies of local development and to regard their existence 'as essential to the healthy development of local government'.[4]

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[1] Sir Herbert Cox, *Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in the Provinces, November 1955–March 1956* (Freetown, 1955), p 213.

[2] *Ibid*, p 175.

[3] *Ibid*, p 213.

[4] *Statement of the Sierra Leone Government on the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Protectorate* (Freetown, 1956), p 17.

For government (both the departing colonial government as well as the emerging African one), there could be no grounds for restoring development functions to the corrupt and inefficient chiefdom administrations, especially by having to relieve the potentially progressive District Councils of their increased responsibilities. But the problem of estrangement between the councils and the chiefdoms persisted and was not tackled and was to be a crucial factor in any explanation of the failure of the second tier of local government. The increase in powers assigned to the councils coincided with the decision to withdraw the District Commissioner from their operations. Hicks has viewed the withdrawal as 'too abrupt' particularly as the councils had had little opportunity for education in responsible budgeting.[1] And indeed the expansion of functions placed a heavy administrative and financial responsibility on the fledgling councils. Within a few years many of their functions would be returned piecemeal, generally to the central government. The transfer of power was too rapid 'and without safeguards and this . . . resulted in Administrative Officers remaining in the background, and in abject complacency to watch the rot being perpetrated by these Councils'.[2]

Financial precariousness severely hampered the performance of District Councils. The principal sources of revenue of the councils were grants-in-aid from the central government and the precepts from the chiefdoms; fees and dues of various kinds, including some licensing, were minor forms of income. Both of these central and local sources of finance proved not only constant but unstable. Grants from the national government for economic development came to an end in 1955 and although grants for capital development and upkeep of roads were paid they were usually stationary and often unreliable. More significantly, from the mid-1960s the chiefdoms increasingly became unable to meet their precept obligations in full. Sometimes whatever revenue the chiefdoms administrations possessed was needed for their own requirements, such as meeting administrative expenses or the costs of carrying out law and order functions. In other instances, haphazard collection of local tax or incidences of embezzlement of tax proceeds at the chiefdom level led to uncertain amounts being paid to the councils. Finally, a number of chiefdom authorities, unable to see visible signs of development compatible with the large amounts disbursed to the District Councils, were reluctant to pay precepts, the more so as the law prescribed no penalties against defaulting chiefdoms.[3] For the five years up to early 1971 the total arrears of precepts amounted to over £350,000.

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[1]U. K. Hicks, *op cit*, p 200.

[2]Paper presented for discussion at a conference of District Officers in December, 1965. After independence in 1961 District Commissioners became known as District Officers.

[3]Minutes of conference of District Officers, Southern Province, 8 August 1968; I. Amadi Emina, *Report of the Committee on the Review of Local Government Structure in Sierra Leone* (Freetown, 1970) (mimeo), pp 42–43. See also File Sp/20, Provincial Secretary, Southern Province, memorandum dated 19 November 1964: 'dissatisfaction with the District Councils has led in this Province to a steady evasion of the payment of precept and only the authority of the District Officer has forced some of the more educated and vocal Paramount Chiefs to pay anything at all'. (Provincial Secretary Office, Southern Province, Bo.)

District Councils were not financially independent. They had to rely on the government and the chiefdoms for their income over which they had no control; and they further lacked any major revenue sources of their own.

Given the virtually unchanging rate of government grants and chiefdom precepts coupled with the variable amounts actually received, the District Councils were hard put to carry out their functions effectively. By the mid 1960s many councils were operating on an essentially care and maintenance basis consequent upon their inability financially to keep pace with rising costs. Development work had to be restricted because the funds available were too inadequate to the projects to be undertaken. Cut-backs in services and capital projects also occurred while some councils were compelled to return certain functions to the central government. In the main, the building and maintenance of feeder roads, bridges and waterways were the major and most successful activities of the councils. But these were financed almost entirely by the constant and unstable capital grants from government which could also be withheld on political grounds as, for example, in the case of the Kono District Council.[1] Increasingly, therefore, the percentage spent on capital developments declined while there occurred, simultaneously, an upward trend in the proportion of money devoted to administration. The bulk of the administrative charges, which were met generally out of the precept proceeds, went into the maintenance of the office of the Secretary and Treasurer and in the payment of a sizeable labour force and works staff. Moreover, travelling and sitting allowances of councillors, paid up to July 1967, consumed large sums. One of the major arguments in favour of the creation of District Councils had been that their larger scale would enable them to spend a greater proportion of their funds on development than the numerous petty chiefdom administrations. This argument was to be validated in only an inconsiderable way, especially as what funds the councils possessed were so limited and unstable.[2]

These budgetary imbalances were exacerbated by the high extent of financial malfeasance within the councils. Large-scale embezzlement of money, a prodigious unauthorised excess expenditure, and extensive misuse of funds plagued all the councils. Much of the financial provisions for works construction and maintenance were frittered away. Contracts were irregularly awarded, improperly drawn up, and often not fulfilled efficiently.[3] There was, moreover, an unreasonable granting of loans to all and sundry. Paramount Chiefs were responsible for recommending loans to suitable candidates as well as ensuring they were paid back on time. But repayments were irregular and interest rarely charged. The chiefs, their relatives and supporters were naturally the prime recipients, yet it was the chiefs who were charged with pursuing outstanding balances. The onus of recovery was on the major debtors—the Paramount Chiefs—reflecting once again the dependence of the District Councils on the chiefdom authorities. Accounting and financial impropriety

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[1] J. R. Cartwright, *op cit*, pp 172–3.

[2] I. A. Emina, *op cit*, pp 43–5.

[3] *Ibid*, pp 45–7.

could perhaps have been restrained if administrative officers had been more closely involved in overseeing council affairs. As it was, the already over-burdened District Officers possessed supervisory roles only when the District Councils were replaced by committees of management and then pressure of work ensured that only irregular checks were made. The auditing of accounts by the central government was also indifferent; in some places accounts were not audited for three years. Nor was there a reference to a single case of prosecution. The power of surcharge, vested in the government, was hardly exercised; even where it was applied in the case of one District Council, 'only Le.30 has been recovered of the total amount of over Le.18,000 surcharged.'[1]

A related and equally chronic weakness lay in the inadequacy of the quality of staff. District Councils appointed their own staff. It may well be that financial uncertainty meant the concomitant inability to secure qualified staff as must have the poor conditions of service compared with alternative forms of employment. Nevertheless, nepotism was widespread in recruitment. Family and political ties constituted the criteria for employment. The ranks of council staff were composed largely of the relatives and clients of chiefs and politicians who could then be pressured into making unauthorised expenditures. The Secretary and Treasurer – the chief executive officers – were in many councils underqualified, inadequately trained and insufficiently paid and often held their positions through powerful connections. Moreover, the low salary structure of all officers was probably a significant factor in encouraging them to recoup their salaries by pilfering council funds. And all this was combined with a preponderance of illiterate councillors, especially in the Northern Province Districts. As to how such a large batch of illiterate and underqualified persons could be entrusted with responsibility for the execution of development plans remains unbelievable.[2]

Rivalries, particularly among the Parmount Chiefs, further cleaved the councils with members competing with each other for amenities for their respective chiefdoms. The inability of members to view the District Council as an agency of District needs rather than as a source of gains for its component chiefdoms reflected the marked absence of a sense of joint enterprise. Decisions were taken without much consideration of the overall interest; resolution for services and facilities for individual chiefdoms were commonplace. A sense of corporate identity was minimal; the chiefdom remained the paramount focus of attachment and loyalty.[3]

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[1] *Ibid*, pp 51–118. For the various irregularities in the operations of the councils, see almost any of the reports of the Auditor-General published in the *Sierra Leone Gazette* (Freetown). (2 Leones = £1).

[2] File P/44 (Vol 3), Provincial Secretary, Southern Province, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, 20 July 1968 (PSSP, Bo.)

[3] *Ibid.* See also Provincial Secretary, Southern Province, to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of the Interior, 23 January 1969. Even as early as 1952 the following remarks were made in the Annual Report of Kono District that the Kono District Council was 'too parochial in outlook, and too unaware of itself as a corporate body'. See File U/2/3 (Provincial Secretary Office, Eastern Province, Kenema.)

Nor were the operations of councils free from partisan political influences, particularly with the inclusion, from the late 1950s, of parliamentarians as members. We have seen that the party in power could withhold or withdraw national government grants from politically non-conforming District Councils. At the District level, jobs and contracts went to party supporters to the exclusion of perhaps more competent applicants. Again, national political parties, dependent as they were on chiefs and local notables for electoral and partisan support in the chiefdoms, were reluctant to censure such influentials for malpractices. Instead, where the party forming the government also controlled a council, it was influential in ensuring that loans would not be paid or collected and that audit queries would be treated with contempt and left unanswered. Even where surcharges were raised, which was very seldom, government was loath to take action, especially against its supporters. On one occasion, Cabinet is said to have set aside a surcharge raised against an MP in the Southern Province.[1] Party politics intruded into District Councils in other ways which proved dysfunctional to their performance. Under a system of competitive elections there sometimes resulted, as in the Northern Province in the mid 1960s, District Councils composed of elected members of rival parties who were roughly equal in number. One consequence was that the work of such councils was often virtually paralysed by undignified squabbles of antagonistic members. In the Kono district, for example, conflicts between supporters of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party and the Kono Progressive Movement led the District Officer to state that 'In 1960 and early 1961 the District Council was not impressive, mainly due to political dissentions among the members.[2]

Meanwhile, the vast amount of Sierra Leoneans living in the countryside within the numerous chiefdoms continued to look upon the District Councils not as local organs but as institutions imposed from outside by the central government. For the ordinary taxpayer the chiefdom remained the primary point of identification. Within the chiefdom the taxpayer might be willing to make sacrifices in the form of tax payment and work on a self-help basis. But development work carried out by District Councils was too remote from the ordinary person to stimulate a contribution from him. The payment of the precept was particularly resented. It absorbed over one third of local revenue which, it was believed, could have been better spent by the people themselves in ways more beneficial to the interests of the chiefdom.[3] As one British District Commissioner observed in 1957: 'It is unlikely the people will ever regard the District Council as anything but a Central Government invention'. It did 'not stem naturally from the traditional development of the people,

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[1]See Note No 21.

[2]I. A. Emina, *op cit*, pp 28, 75; and File O1/8/2G, Handing Over Notes for Kono District dated 6 February 1962 (Ministry of the Interior, Freetown).

[3]P. S. Mould, 'Rural Improvement by Communal Labour in the Bombali District of Sierra Leone,' *Journal of Local Administration Overseas*, 5, 1 (1966), p 31.

[and] I do not believe that it will at any foreseeable time be supported by their loyalties. It is at once too big or too new'.[1]

The inclusion of Paramount Chiefs in the membership of the District Councils from the time of their inception was partly intended to provide some sort of bridge between the new councils and the chiefdoms. The chiefs continued to command the allegiance of the chiefdom people and it was hoped they would lend legitimacy to the non-traditional councils. We must, however, not over-emphasise this basic attachment of the people to the chiefs; it was rare for a chief to enjoy the full support of the mass of the chiefdom population. Nevertheless, without the involvement of chiefs, the District Councils would have been considerably weakened in their operations. Without the chiefs, such development that did take place at the grassroots would have been infinitely more difficult to achieve. The cooperation of chiefs was essential for the success of development work in the countryside. The involvement of chiefs thus provided the councils with an element of authority and prestige they otherwise lacked among the rural populace. But chiefly influence also proved detrimental to the success of the councils. The assumption of executive functions by Paramount Chiefs as District Council chairmen led to deleterious interference in the administration of the councils.[2] Their irresponsible approach to the granting and repayment of loans, their persistent efforts to advance chiefdom rather than District ends, and their reluctance to pay the full amount of precepts which, no doubt, many of them saw as intolerable external sanctions, have already been commented on. Despite the element of legitimacy bestowed on the councils by the 'traditional' elite, chiefly impairments proved harmful to their proper functioning.

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District Councils could not escape the serious criticism that came to be levelled against them for their failures and weaknesses. The Public Accounts Committee of 1961/62 expressed great concern at 'the inefficiency, irregularity, mismanagement, and misappropriation of District Council finances'. These criticisms were echoed over a number of years in the reports of the Auditor General which revealed a deplorable and lamentable state of affairs. In consequence of these and other revelations of mismanagement, the District Councils were suspended and replaced by committees of management (composed essentially of District Officers and Paramount Chiefs) during the years 1962–5 and 1967–71. But, as a government statement later declared, 'the situation has never improved.'[3] Indeed, political

[1]File D.C. 60, District Commissioner, Tonkolili, to Commissioner, Northern Province, 22 February 1957 (Provincial Secretary, Southern Province Archives, Bo). On the basis of a poll conducted in 1963, Vernon R. Dorjahn made the following comment: 'That only 6 non-literates [N = 52] knew the name of the [District] Council President, reflects an all-too-common lack of interest in local government and demonstrates, perhaps, a lack of concern, support and faith in the District Council'. See 'The Extent and Nature of Political Knowledge in a Sierra Leone Town,' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 3 (1968), p 212.

[2]Cox, *op cit*, p 207.

[3]Release from the Ministry of the Interior cited in the *Daily Mail* (Freetown), 11 April 1972, p 8.

instability and military takeovers probably aggravated the situation as no government could give any serious thought to introducing reforms in local government. In the meantime, criticism persisted and mounted. In 1968 a conference of District Officers in the Southern Province urged government to close all District Councils and, instead, strengthen the chiefdom administrations as units of local governance. In the same year the Paramount Chiefs of Koinadugu District in the Northern Province passed a resolution for the dissolution of the councils. At last, in November, the government considered it expedient to abolish the councils with their giving way to vigorously overhauled chiefdom administrations. Before implementing its decision, however, it sought to ascertain the views of administrators and chiefs.

The inquiries revealed no consensus of opinion. A slight majority of opinion, including that of both administrators and chiefs, held that District Councils were necessary but required to be reorganised and closely supervised. Others argued that their miserable failure reflected their unsuitability and should be replaced by rehabilitated chiefdom organs. Meanwhile, the criticism ventilated against the councils had reached a climax. A Private Member's motion condemning the activities of the District Councils and calling upon government to review their continued existence was passed in Parliament in January 1969. District Councils had fallen into a state of absolute disrepute. They had either to be rescued from their present morass of inefficiency and set on a more effective path or abolished altogether. After much delay, a committee on the review of local government structure was set up by government and began work in early September 1970. With the assistance of a United Nations consultant, I. A. Emina, the committee recommended certain reforms in the organisation of District Councils and that when overhauled they should be retained as the second tier of local government.[1]

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District Councils in Sierra Leone have been notoriously ineffective. They have failed to meet the expectation placed upon them as agencies of progress in the provision of amenities and services at the local level. The basic weaknesses of the councils were symptomatic partly of limited human and financial resources and also absence of close government supervision. The instituting of closer control and organisational adjustments could possibly have brought about some improvement in the functioning of District Councils, although the shortage of trained personnel to run them properly would remain a constraint which could only be overcome in time. More crucially, however, was the criticism that there was little identification with the councils on the part of the chiefdom authorities and the ordinary people. The persistence of negative or indifferent orientations towards the councils made it difficult for them to gain the acceptance of the people which was so essential for their success. If this criticism was valid then the downgrading or closing of the councils was a justifiable action; the time horizon for significantly reorienting or altering the attachments of the rural folk could be only a long one. The political culture was not

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[1] I. A. Emina, *op cit.*

consonant with the new Western-type political institution and this noncongruence between orientation and structure could be rectified only over a considerable period of time. Government's decision in early 1972 to suspend District Councils rather than overhaul them, thus going against the recommendation of the Local Government Review Committee, reflected its desire to institute new local organs based on the chiefdoms. The chiefdoms have remained as the fundamental units of local attachment, and the strength and durability of this chiefdom identification provides a firm underpinning for political arrangements based on the chiefdom. Being in closer touch with the people, it is hoped that chiefdom political institutions will energise the rural peasantry and generate the conditions conducive to socio-economic development.

An Innovative Approach to Administrative Training: An Experience from Nigeria

HARRY A. GREEN*

Administrative education, although it may have as an objective the improvement of an administrative system or organization, is not task or organization specific. Rather, it is person oriented. It is usually institution-based, but need not be, and usually persons from many different organizations and backgrounds participate. It differs from administrative training in that it is a rather broad gauge approach to developing new knowledge, attitudes and skills for a rather ill-defined future while management training tends to be oriented toward the development of job-specific skills that have immediate application.[1]

Within this broad definition of administrative education, we can fit the Masters of Public Administration programme of the University of Ife. Invariably, the participants in this programme provide an interesting mix from different States (or organizations), different educational backgrounds and different ethnic or intra-ethnic groups. They are sent by their State (or Federal or foreign) governments as a part of the staff development programme.

Originally the MPA programme was designed as an extension of the postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration (DPA). Persons who had distinguished themselves (by written examinations) were permitted to proceed to the MPA programme which was the DPA plus thesis. In the context, the DPA was soon interpreted as a failed MPA and soon lost some credence among participants and future participants.

Thereafter, the MPA was established as a separate programme into which both DPA holders and non-DPA could be admitted. The non-DPA holders were to be required to spend four terms in residence while the DPA holders could complete their work

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[1]Although there are many variations of a theme, this broad definition also applies to the dichotomies of management education/training and executive education/training. The terms administrator, manager and executive can be used synonymously. See, Sidney Mailick (ed) *The Making of the Manager* (Garden City, New York; Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1974), pp 17–18.

in three terms. In reality, there was never any significant programme distinction and all participants finished the required course-work simultaneously. Recently, this has become less significant because most MPA participants have been non-DPA holders.

The objective of the MPA programme is:[1]

'to provide an advanced and specialized course in Public Administration and Management. This course is particularly suitable for the mid-career officers who have had several years practical experience and who are reaching the higher levels of administrative management'.

The structure of the programme (Table) reflects this objective in that compulsory courses (1) and (2) should broaden the intellectual parameters of the participants, courses (2) and (3) should broaden analytical skills and the specialization should provide a field of learning about a single subject or topic.

TABLE

MPA *Programme, University of Ife, Nigeria*

I COMPULSORY COURSES (FULL YEAR)
- i Management and Administrative Theory
- ii Public Policy Analysis and Decision-Making Process
- iii Quantitative and Research Methods

II SPECIALIZATION (ONE OF THE FOLLOWING – FULL YEAR)
- i Personnel Management
- ii Budgeting and Financial Management
- iii Development Planning
- iv Project Analysis, Evaluation and Management
- v Public Enterprises
- vi Urban Administration and Management
- vii International Affairs
- viii University Administration and Management

III DISSERTATION

A satisfactory dissertation of 15,000 to 20,000 words based on research of an approved project.

Source: *Graduate Studies* at the Institute of Administration, University of Ife.

The major pedagogical approaches to achieving the programme objective has been the traditional lecture and seminar methods. Both of these approaches are useful for certain purposes but it is increasingly questionable that the lecture method has more than limited application to a programme for adult learners.

Policy-Analysis and Decision-Making

During the first and second years of my assignment, I was asked to teach the compulsory course in 'Public Policy Analysis and Decision Making'. This was not,

[1]University of Ife, Nigeria. *Graduate Studies at the Institute of Administration*, nd, p 19.

of course, the major reason for my assignment, but since the request was based on staff shortages in 1974/76 it could hardly be declined. When it was agreed that I should teach the course, I decided at the outset to experiment with a more innovative approach than the traditional pedagogical techniques. Putting together the three facts that the participants were all adults with an experience base, that the course was not one that necessarily required extensive lecturing, and that it was both cognitive and skill oriented in character, I decided to attempt an andragogical approach.[1]

An important constraint on this approach is the system of evaluation of participant performance. Each participant is evaluated solely on the results of one, three-hour examination given at the close of the academic year. This is a matter of accepted university policy and there is little interest in changing it. Therefore, any innovative approach would have to be adapted to this reality and conducted in such a way that it did not jeopardize the student's examination chances.[2]

The Approach

At the outset a syllabus was prepared and divided into four parts: (1) required reading (general); (2) required reading (Nigeria); (3) selected recommended additional reading; and, (4) policy areas for analysis. The syllabus was designed this way because none of the participants had any background in the theoretical aspects of policy analysis and most of them were novices to the study (but not the practice) of public administration. After a few days, the format appeared unduly restrictive and conflicted with the objective of individual participation in the selection of readings. Consequently, the syllabus was modified to permit each individual participant a greater role in selecting readings based on explorations among the materials available in the library. As in many LDC's, the availability of teaching materials was a constraint but not a serious one. Subsequently, the syllabus was seen as more a guiding than directing instrument.

By agreement among the participants, each one would be required to read, review and report on a major piece of work in the field. This meant that there were to be several different analyses/reports presented to the group. By agreement between the lecturer and the participants, it was agreed that each student would submit nine written reports based on individually selected readings: five on theoretical aspects of policy analysis and four with specific relevance to Nigeria (whether theoretical or applied). Moreover, a number of special lectures on a number of policy issues were arranged. These included urban policy, foreign policy, agriculture policy and budget policy.

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[1] In this context, I use andragogical to mean an emphasis on adult learning with considerable reliance on participatory techniques. For a full explanation of the approach, see John D. Ingalls, *A Trainers Guide to Andragogy* (Rev Ed) (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1973).

[2] In the writer's view, the persistence of annual sessional examinations is an ineffective anachronism. Almost every modern theory of learning emphasizes the need for frequent 'feedback' about progress.

Furthermore, the participants were divided into three member policy analysis groups.[1] The principle of division was that each team should reflect as much diversity – cultural, organizational, educational – as possible. The primary purpose of this exercise was to develop skills in team-building. The secondary purpose was to produce a set of policy analysis case studies that hopefully could be used as teaching materials for subsequent classes. The third purpose was to encourage cooperation among participants with different cultural, social and organizational experiences.

The objective of each policy analysis team was to produce a written analysis of a specific policy. The choice of the project, the methods of analysis and the working arrangements were the responsibility of each team. However, a 'model' of analysis was presented as a guide and each team was encouraged to utilize the services of outside consultants if it was necessary. In this case, the lecturer served as the 'Chief Consultant' to all the groups and coordinated requests for other consultants. The reason for this was to allow the Chief Consultant to handle as many requests for assistance as his competence permitted, to ensure that requests for other consultants was not frivolous, and to ensure that each consultant was willing and able to serve when needed. In all cases, the use of the consultants was restricted to persons on the University staff because of the problem of accessibility.

As indicated above, the details of the policy analysis project was left entirely to the team. No participant was permitted a role in choosing the other members of his team, but once the teams were formed, it was the team responsibility to select the project, to allocate responsibility for the work to be done, including the actual production of a typewritten or cyclo-styled report, and to determine what specialized assistance was needed to complete the project.

A target date was established for each project and a schedule of presentation to the other participants was planned. Each team was required to produce an extra copy of the report to place on reserve in the library for other participants to review prior to the oral presentation. On the day of presentation, each member of the team sat at a table in front of the other participants and the team leader (selected by the team) made the primary presentation. Other team members were permitted a brief time to supplement or support the team leader but not to criticize. Prior to the completion of the report, differences of opinion were encouraged. However, the Report was supposed to reflect the team position on the issue and individual differences were to be worked out by that time.

On the day of presentation, a minimum of two and maximum of three hours was allocated. The team was encouraged to make its presentation in 30 minutes, but was permitted up to 45 minutes. The remainder of the time was allocated to criticism of the report, discussion of issues and defense of the team's approach.

[1]The size of the groups was arbitrary but based on rational assessment. The number five was considered but I decided against it because the number of cases produced would be correspondingly reduced.

The objectives of this approach were to permit the MPA participants to achieve the following:

i to obtain substantive knowledge (conceptual), new attitudes and new skills;
ii to allow individual involvement in the selection of relevant readings;
iii to encourage maximum participation in discussions;
iv to develop team-building capacity;
v to encourage cross-ethnic and multi-organizational cooperation;
vi to share relevant work experiences;
vii to improve leadership capacity (synthesis, communications, social skills).

In addition to the conceptual experience, this approach promoted the development of specific skills:

i improved analysis (knowledge and application of techniques);
ii improved planning and the coordination of activities;
iii improved communications skills particularly speaking and writing abilities;
iv improved capacity to work in the team context;
v improve tolerances for social differences.

Assessment

It is very difficult to assess the results of any education or training programme. This difficulty perhaps coupled with an understanding of the costs of evaluation usually discourages systematic effort. An innovative effort is even more difficult to evaluate and is probably impossible unless it is a part of the original design. The effort described above was not intended to be evaluated in any significant fashion.

Be that as it may, there are a few things that can be written about it. First, the approach was very popular with the participants. Every member of the class was interviewed several times to encourage recommendations for improving the course. Most of the recommendations submitted pertained to improving the availability of materials and library services. All participants strongly supported the participatory approach and felt, whether correctly or incorrectly, that they had learned more and had a more useful educational experience than conventional methods would have allowed.

Secondly, nine policy cases were produced from this experiment and some of them are reasonably good. From a strict constructionist point of view of the case method, these cases may be of doubtful teaching value because they were prepared by amateurs and not professional case writers. However, because of the access that many of the participants had to current information (usually not available to academics), the cases are valuable on that count alone. Moreover, they can be used as Nigerian case studies upon which future participants can be urged to improve.

Thirdly, all the participants in both the 1974–5 and 1975–6 academic sessions successfully completed the course and passed the final examinations. Performance, measured by test scores, was mixed but many of the participants earned A's and high B's.[1]

[1]The policy cases were evaluated for the benefit of the team members. The results were not incorporated in the final results because of the restrictions of examination regulations.

The emphasis on improved speaking and writing in this course was fundamentally related to improved analytical skills. Improvements in analysis have to be communicated effectively if they are to have the desirable impact. Each paper submitted was reviewed by the lecturer and commented upon when improvements were felt necessary. The basic flaw in this context was that the papers were treated discretely by the lecturer rather than imposing a final holistic judgment about progress and the need for improvement. This was due, unfortunately, to the constraint of time.

The evaluation of social skills improvement is likewise difficult. However, my knowledge of the progress of the teams, relationship among members of the teams, discussions and interactions in the total group sessions and the expressed popularity of the approach among the participants all suggest a positive evaluation.

On the matter of the use of consultants, the participants were a bit restrained. The 'chief consultant' was consulted frequently but usually for short periods of time. However, the use of other 'consultants' was limited to two or three on rare occasions. In my view, this is an area where the approach can be improved considerably.

Conclusion

This approach demonstrates that one issue about the lecture approach can be laid to rest. A primary advantage claimed for the lecture method is that it is less expensive than participatory approaches. Moreover, it is frequently claimed that the lecture approach has advantages for the transmission of substantive knowledge. While these claims may be true, it does not mean that other approaches may not serve the same purpose as well or better. Also, it assumes that all lectures approach the ideal lecture – a situation of well preparedness, good planning, good speaking and good communication with the audience.[1] From my limited experience, the truly effective lecturer is very rare.

In this approach, no more time was allocated for meetings than would have been the case if all meetings had been lecture periods. Moreover, during the period when team projects were underway, scheduled meetings were suspended for various periods of time to allow the teams to meet and work together and to obtain consultancy assistance. The one area in which more time may have been committed was the review of individual student papers. However, the objectives of the written papers – improved skills of analysis and writing – would have been valid even if the lecture approach was used exclusively.

The final examination results illustrate that substantive knowledge was not neglected by this approach. As indicated, no student failed this paper during the two-year experiment and these results were certified by an external examiner each year. Moreover, each participant learned a lot about one area of public policy and received an overview of several others.

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[1]Harold P. Zelko, 'The Lecture', in Robert L. Craig and Lester R. Bittel (eds) *Training and Development Handbook* (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, pp 141–153).

If one were to describe this approach, it might be called the composite approach – a little of everything. The policy analysis project is similar to Revans' 'project approach' although he might disavow it.[1] At the beginning of the session a few lectures were deemed necessary but these quickly faded into seminars and working sessions to plan the course throughout the year. The carefully selected groups and the emphasis on improving social skills can be related to the objectives of sensitivity training and organization development;[2] the proposed use of consultants in conjunction with group projects suggest a relationship to the syndicate approach.[3] Moreover, the approach emphasized the importance of analysis for a practical problem, encouraged a limbo attitude toward completion of the project, encouraged group cohesiveness to plan, to develop, to complete and defend the project, encouraged decision-making behaviour, and stressed the importance of communicating decisions effectively.

No claim is made that any of the concepts used in this approach are original. The only unique aspect is the attempt to merge them into a single approach and promote conceptual and process knowledge within the context of a regular degree programme. That is to say, this has been an attempt to incorporate 'problem-centred' learning within the context of 'subject-centred' learning. In this way, I think the approach has been successful and that it demonstrates a superiority to the conventional lecture/seminar approaches without additional costs.

Similar to many innovations, no claim can be made that this training innovation will be institutionalized. The circumstances extant at the time were not conducive to a planned change strategy – there was no opportunity for unfreezing, changing and refreezing conditions. Its value as an innovation and as an experiment must stand alone apart from any probability of programme or institution change.

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[1]R. Revans, 'The Project Method: Learning By Doing,' in Malick (ed) *loc cit*, pp 132–161. Revans would probably contend that the project method cannot be adapted to the classroom. With the disclaimer that the classroom was just one small part of the learning environment in this experiment, I respectfully disagree.

[2]See Meyer Feldberg and John Simpson, 'The Contribution of Behavioural Sciences to Organization Development', in Bernard Taylor and Gordon Lippitt (eds) *Management Development and Training Handbook* (McGraw-Hill, 1975, pp 371–384).

[3]For two separate discussions of this approach see John Adams, 'The Use of Syndicates in Management Training' in Taylor and Lippitt, *ibid*, p 191: and Andrew Life, 'Henley and the Syndicate Approach', in Malick, *loc cit*, p 119.

Rural Administration in India: A Research Survey during 1950-70

ABHIJIT DATTA*

Rural administration in India centres around the colonial system of district administration introduced in India at the end of the 18th century by refashioning the Mughal system of administration to suit the requirements of British administration in India. Essentially, it was the very opposite of local government and depended on a centrally appointed district officer acting as the agent of the Government. The real dilemma of its reconciliation with a participative system of government was faced in India in the 'twenties of this century when experiments with rural local government were first made after the Montagu-Chelmsford constitutional reforms. Its second phase of reckoning took place during the post-Independence period in experiments with a new form of rural local government, popularly known as the panchayati raj, ushered in the wake of the famous Mehta Committee report (1957). The district administration has survived both these challenges successfully and accommodated a parallel system of rural local government in India since 1920.

The present survey of research covers both district administration and panchayati raj during the first two decades of India's independence and is intended to serve as a bench-mark research survey. It includes an original contribution to public administration by pursuing acceptable methods of academic research.

District Administration

District administration has been defined as 'the total action of government in an area specified as a district by a state government'.[1] Our concern with district administration, on the other hand, is limited to the institution of the district officer, and not the entire administrative structure of the State government functioning at the district level. Research dealing with aspects of administration at levels above or below the district, but having bearing on the role of the district officer, is included in the survey. Similarly, the relationships of the district officer with his counterparts in the various functional departments in the district, as well as local government institutions, would come within the scope of our survey. Actual research into the

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[1]David C. Potter, *Government in Rural India:* An Introduction to Contemporary District Administration, London, 1964, p 8.

institution of the district officer, to be worthwhile, needs to be limited to a specific aspect of his manifold responsibilities and activities, unless the office is studied either in an historical or comparative setting. Failure to do this inevitably results in a tedious description of the nature of the institution as such. More relevant and significant questions, from the point of view of research, such as: how the institution functions in India and other non-white former British colonies? how to evaluate the institution in the changed context of self-government? and so on, are seldom posed by the researchers.

VOLUME OF RESEARCH: Although the volume of literature on district administration in India is vast, actual research studies in the subject is woefully meagre. This is all the more surprising as district administration is regarded as the keystone of the Indian administrative system. Our bibliography therefore contains only seven entries in this branch of Rural Administration.

QUALITY OF RESEARCH: In terms of quality, it is difficult to be satisfied with the methods followed in most of the studies. The studies show excessive reliance on description of the existing situation without trying to spell out their implications in broader contexts. Two studies (2, 7) employing the case method and the O & M approach are, really speaking, not studies of district administration as such, but application of particular techniques to the study of administration in situations where the district officer is involved. Four studies (3, 4, 5, 6) are compendium pieces of research without any discernible purpose. Only one study (1) succeeds in the application of research methods to a well-defined field of investigation and is sufficiently analytical and evaluative in its findings.

FUTURE PRIORITIES: In view of the negligible volume and poor quality of research in district administration, the conclusion seems inescapable that improvements are called for in both these directions. Research in district administration in future must be restricted to specific issues, and not allowed to degenerate into aimless collections of facts and opinions.

Panchayati Raj

In this survey, we have viewed panchayati raj in a wider sense to include all rural local governments. The present movement and experiment with a new form of rural local government, popularly known as panchayati raj, is hardly a decade old. In fact, in a few States the change-over to the new system is yet to be completed. During the 'fifties all the States had the old system of rural local government consisting of the district, taluka or local boards. For a few years during the 'sixties in many States the new panchayati system was introduced gradually, side by side with the old system. It would be incorrect to assume that the new system grew out of the old; in fact, the present panchayats were created with a view to democratise the rural community development movement. The result has not been in the direction of strengthening the English concept of local administration with popular participation. The present survey thus encompasses widely different attitudes to rural local government during the last two decades, and research work in this field is also torn between these two contrasting situations.

The institutional incomparability is not only limited to the old and new forms of rural local government, this is even more glaring between urban and rural local governments, after the introduction of panchayati raj. In fact, official parlance in India would include only the urban local government within the genetic term 'local self-government'. This dichotomy does not seem to have attracted the notice of the researchers in the field of panchayati raj, even when they study two different varieties of local government working side by side. This is an area which needs some exploration by the researchers on panchayati raj before embarking on their fact collecting and dissecting missions.

VOLUME OF RESEARCH: Few other institutional experiments anywhere have occasioned such torrents of printed material as panchayati raj. Much of the literature is admittedly polemical; still, the research output on panchayati raj during less than a decade is substantial by any reckoning. Earlier research in local government was mainly historical in approach with structure as the main focus of interest. In our survey also we have at least four research pieces (24, 25, 27, 28) which carry this tradition in recent years.

From the angle of subject coverage, two areas seem to be favoured by the researchers: (i) structure and working, and (ii) political aspects. These two areas claim as many as 17 studies. Historical studies account for four research pieces and the remaining eight studies are distributed among particular aspects of panchayati raj administration like finance, State control, planning, urbanisation, and official-non-official relations. There has been no comparative research on panchayati raj, and only one historical research examines India's experiment with local self-government before World War II. No attempt has been made by any researcher at international comparisons with India in rural local government.[1] Similarly, aspects such as public participation, personnel, inter-local relations, area problems, forms of management, administration of specific function, etc. have been neglected by the researchers. By and large, research in panchayati raj have taken an anthropological slant and it is time to switch over to other approaches and aspects not explored so far.

QUALITY OF RESEARCH: From the point of view of quality of research, one positive gain seems to be the improvement of techniques and adoption of approaches by the researchers not attempted in local government so far. On the other hand, much of the research efforts have only limited and marginal significance from the point of view of administration. It is not clear, for instance, how our understanding of panchayati administration is improved by studying the political process, unless its linkage with administrative action is clearly established. Again, a total evaluation of the working of panchayati raj may be quite deceptive, if not unscientific, since such judgements would inevitably have to be value-loaded. There is another weakness of this type of total evaluation studies. In many cases research is based on

[1]This has been partially attempted through documentation in H. Zink *et al*, *Rural Local Government in Sweden, Italy and India:* A Comparative Study, London, 1957. Professor R. Bhaskaran acted as the rapporteur for India.

field work in a single panchayati institution, without adequate thought as to how such findings could be generalised. Investigation into the totality of a situation within a narrow universe may be quite appropriate for an anthropologist or an O & M expert working in an isolated situation, but this is less useful in examining broader institutional issues.

Historical research done so far in the field of rural local government tends to be excessively concerned with the legal structure, and pay scant attention to the socio-political forces influencing it. In terms of coverage also, only a handful of States have been worked on. Our knowledge of local government in the former princely States is negligible and it would certainly be worthwhile to compare the experience in the large ex-princely States with the erstwhile British Indian provinces.

We now turn to the rest of the research work in panchayati raj directed to particular aspects of administration. Earlier, we have indicated our preference for this type of studies and suggested a few newer areas where these could be promoted. Since the areas already attended to have not exhausted their potentialities, it would be worthwhile to examine these studies a little more intensively.

The two studies on finance (3, 17)[1] both try to relate financial and physical performance, but do so in a somewhat pedestrian manner. More intensive studies on expenditure analysis and application of statistical techniques in this field would perhaps be fruitful. In addition, studies on tax administration and budgeting could be launched in the field of local government by experts in public finance.

Researches into the machinery and procedures of external control over panchayati raj bodies (5, 21) do not examine the practicability of alternative arrangements, nor do they question the existing inter-governmental relationships with enough conviction. The study on planning in relation to panchayati raj (18) is again a disappointing piece in as much as more attention seems to have been paid to the problem of communication between the planners and the people than the extent of planning discretion left with the panchayats. Between the two studies on urbanisation (10, 20), the one on metropolitan Calcutta raises the unique administrative problems of the peri-urban areas. All these studies are mainly descriptive in nature and while they draw our attention to particular areas of panchayati raj administration, they lack the methodological rigor to be exciting.

The most creditable piece of research on panchayati raj examined in the survey is focussed on the relationships between the officials and non-officials (12). The study is methodologically sound, rich in data and responses, and perceptive in its analysis. Although the author calls it an 'anthropologically oriented depth study', he has avoided the common pitfalls of other researches with similar orientation. The only criticism one can make is that the supposed linkages between the socio-economic background of the officials and non-officials and the 'crisis situations' analysed, do not appear to be very strong.

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[1] *Numbers in brackets relate to the numbering given in the bibliography which follows* (Ed).

FUTURE PRIORITIES: From our analysis of research in panchayati raj two conclusions follow, one negative and the other positive. On the negative plane, future research needs to be discouraged which aims to evaluate the entire working of the panchayati raj, except perhaps in a purely historical study. On the positive side, more basic research needs to be promoted on local government and, so far as administration is concerned, on particular aspects and specific problems that can be handled satisfactorily by adhering to the established cannons of social science research.

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22 Purwar, Vijaya Lakshmi. *Panchayats in Uttar Pradesh*, Lucknow, 1960.
The author studies the working and achievements of panchayats in U.P., more particularly their role as development agencies and their relations with the various State departments, with the help of field survey and secondary materials.

23 Rao, A. V. Raman. *Structure and Working of Village Panchayats*, Poona, 1954.
This research study is based on replies to questionnaire administered in the field and deals with the structure finances, working and supervision and control of various types of panchayats in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Madras.

24 Rao, V. Venkata. *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government and Administration in Andhra and Madras States, 1850 to 1950*, Bombay, 1960.
The author, relying on documentary and secondary materials, covers the history of local self-government in Andhra Pradesh and Madras, the local government machinery and functions, local finance, local personnel administration and the external relations of local authorities.

25 Rao, V. Venkata. *A Hundred Years of Local Self-Government and Administration in Assam*, Gauhati, 1963.
This study is based on documentary and secondary materials and covers the historical development os local self-government in Assam, its constitutional stucture and functions, local finance, staffing and inter-governmental relations.

26 Retzlaff, Ralph H. *Village Government in India*, Bombay, 1962.
This is a case study of a village through participant-observation and concentrates on the working of a village panchayat, together with the authors' observations on panchayati raj in general.

27 Sharma, M. P. *Evolution of the Rural Self-Government and Administration in the Uttar Pradesh*, Bombay, 1957.
This book is based on documentary research and deals with the history of rural district boards in U.P., their constitution, elections, powers, internal organisation, staffing, State control, finance and working.

28 Tinker, Hugh. *The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma*, London, 1954.
This study is based on documentary research dealing with the gradual development of local self-government in the former British India from the early days up to 1935.

Political Commitment and Administrative Support

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PRECONDITIONS FOR GROWTH WITH EQUITY POLICY**

Development policy has shifted drastically over the past decade, from an intensive effort to increase Gross National Product to a complex strategy for generating economic growth with social equity. As the industrial promotion programmes of the 1960s faded, both international assistance agencies and governments in developing countries gave priority to expanding agricultural productivity, improving the quality of life in rural areas and ameliorating the plight of those living in absolute poverty. A growing number of countries now emphasize more spatially balanced and functionally integrated programmes focusing on rural modernization, extension of urban services and facilities to smaller cities and villages, and reallocation of investment from a few metropolitan centers to economically lagging rural regions.[1]

Fundamental shifts in priorities are reflected in national development plans. The Government of the Philippines, for instance, proclaims that 'no longer is maximum economic growth the singular apex of goals, equally desired are maximum employment, promotion of social development and more equitable distribution of income and wealth.' Rural modernization receives priority equal to urban industrialization. The 1974–1977 national development plan seeks to redress regional imbalances through '. . . the correction of policies which artificially favor a few select areas,' by combining physical, economic, social, administrative and financial programmes for development of rural regions and communities.[2] Similarly, Thailand's Third

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[1]The changing trends are reviewed in detail in Dennis A. Rondinelli and Kenneth Ruddle, *Urban Functions in Rural Development: An Analysis of Integrated Spatial Development Policy* (Washington: U.S. Agency for International Development, 1976).

[2]Republic of the Philippines, *Four Year Development Plan:* 1975–1977 (Manilla: Nationa Economic and Development Authority, 1973), p 307.

Economic and Social Development Plan seeks to balance national development, restructuring the economic system to reduce income inequalities by developing human resources and creating rural employment. Priority is given to accelerating progress in economically depressed regions, linking them to Bangkok, diversifying their economic bases by inducing agricultural and mineral processing industries to relocate in outlying areas, and strengthening interregional trade. The strategy also seeks to integrate rural and urban development within each region by coordinating agricultural and industrial production, synchronizing location decisions, concentrating public investment in smaller towns and cities, and investing in rural infrastructure, housing and educational and social services.[1]

The Economic and Social Development Plan of El Salvador, calling for government agencies to increase rural income and employment by expanding agricultural productivity, would also reduce overcrowding in metropolitan San Salvador by dispersing population, community services and productive activities to smaller urban centers. The plan foresees gradual improvements in intercity transportation systems, sanitation and utility services for rural communities and administrative structures in small municipalities.[2] In Kenya, where integrated development is a principal policy objective, the government proposes to select cities and towns for intensive growth, creating a framework of smaller towns and villages as rural service centers, and establish among them road, rail, air, energy and communications networks.[3]

Since the late 1960s, the World Bank, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Programme, regional banks and bilateral aid programmes have also struggled with the complex problem of promoting social equity with limited investment resources. USAID programmes aim to strengthen rural institutions, involve the poor in programme planning, increase and diversify agricultural production and integrate agricultural, commercial and industrial projects. 'One method of stimulating rural development and slowing urban-rural migration,' USAID policies declare, 'is the creation of market areas and market towns complete with services and amenities designed to make rural life productive and satisfying.'[4] World Bank policies would integrate functionally a wide variety of services, institutions and technical inputs needed to increase agricultural production. The Bank recommends combining, through integrated projects, those extension, marketing, credit and agro-industrial services required to commercialize agriculture; infrastructure such as feeder roads, communication networks and small

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[1]See Phisit Pakkasem, 'Industrialization Strategies and Growth Pole Approach to South Thailand Regional Planning,' prepared for Seminar on Industrialization Strategies and the Growth Pole Approach to Regional Planning and Development (Nagoya: United Nations Centre for Regional Development, 1975), mimeographed.

[2]United Nations Development Programme, *UNDP Assistance Requested by the Government of El Salvador for the Period* 1973–1977 (New York: United Nations, 1973).

[3]Republic of Kenya, *Development Plan*, 1970–1974 (Nairobi: Government of Kenya, 1969).

[4]U.S. Agency for International Development, *Fiscal Year* 1975 *Submission to the Congress: Summary* (Washington: USAID, 1974), p 17.

power plants that promote labour-intensive industries; and education, family planning and other health services to meet the social needs of the rural poor.[1]

But despite drastic changes in development priorities, in most countries, rhetoric has outpaced accomplishments. After half a decade, neither assistance agencies nor Third World governments have fully operationalized growth-with-equity policies. Nor, more importantly, have they consolidated the political and administrative support needed to achieve a significant redistribution of wealth, increased income or more geographically dispersed development. In most cases the emphasis on social equity preceded policy and administrative reforms crucial for rural transformation. In most countries, governments have not seriously sought the difficult policy changes needed to promote redistribution. In some, entrenched interests and inadequate administrative capacity undermine equity programmes; in others, powerful elites and traditional bureaucracies simply ignore changes in national policies.

This paper, reviewing the experiences with rural development in a number of countries, examines major political and administrative obstacles to implementing the new directions in development policy; identifies administrative prerequisites or components for growth-with-equity programmes; and suggests a selective, experimental programme of international assistance for achieving integrated development goals. Building political commitment and expanding national administrative capacity, it is argued, are two elusive, but essential, preconditions for achieving redistribution. In developing countries the national government is generally the only entity capable of inititating, organizing, and guiding programmes of the magnitude and complexity of integrated rural development. Without national political, administrative and financial support integrated development programmes inevitably fail. National inputs must be substantive, extensive and continuous. Commitment to a complex programme for transforming economic and social structures in rural areas, reallocating investments from primate cities, breaking the political bottlenecks to income redistribution, and consolidating local support for development projects must be strong if change is to be introduced and sustained. Among the most important national inputs are high-level political commitment, support of national bureaucracies, and the willingness and capacity of ministries and international agencies to establish a set of complementary policies to reinforce rural development programmes.

Political Commitment

Political support for rural development is the *sine qua non* of strategy implementation. International assistance agencies recognize its importance and the fact that it is often an element missing in developing countries. USAID admits that 'a great gap remains between sentiment, rhetoric and policy in many nations' and that narrowing this gap

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[1]Hans-Joachim Lell, 'Integrated Regional Development', *Finance and Development*, Vol 10, No 2 (June 1973), pp 23–25 and 38.

is a prerequisite to operationalizing policy.[1] The World Bank similarly contends that a 'strong commitment to rural development policies at the national level is required if the impact on the problem of poverty is to be effective and broad based', and acknowledges that . . . 'in some developing countries, present policies and institutional structures are so far from favorable to rural development that a policy shift could only follow major political change.'[2]

Political commitment involves a pervasive and sustained determination by the highest levels of leadership to achieve the goals of rural transformation, economic reorganization and social equity. Simple declarations of intent without strong measures for administrative reform are, at best, vacuous promises. But at the same time, experience indicates that high-level commitment must rest on a broad base of political support from government agencies, private organizations and local groups. Farmers must be able to sustain enough pressure on government to prevent the sabotaging of redistribution policies by elites and entrenched interests in national and local bureaucracies.

A broad base of political commitment is necessary for three reasons. First, where rural transformation has become a major priority in national development, strong political support was needed to articulate strategy in national policies, major legislative declarations and administrative orders. Political initiative by charismatic leaders and ideological movements has been a prime stimulant for rural development, especially in Asia and Africa. In India, Pakistan, Taiwan, Malaysia and the People's Republic of China, widely varying yet equally forceful political commitments prompted the reallocation of national resources to rural areas. In Africa, particularly in recently independent countries, nationalistic political leaders seized on the concept of rural development to consolidate tribal support and create a new national policy. As Cowan notes in his review of African rural development, political and ideological forces overwhelmingly influenced the scope and direction of rural transformation. 'If the party in power sees the need for rural mobilization as part of the programme of total transformation of society,' Cowan observes, 'the approach used to bring about rural change will involve different methods than if government sees its role only as that of providing favorable conditions within which the responsibility for progress lies with the individual.'[3] Thus, in Africa, political commitment and ideological preconceptions determined not only the extent to which rural needs were reflected in national policy, but also directly influences the com-

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[1]U.S. Agency for International Development, *Implementation of 'New Directions' in Development Assistance*, Report to the Committee on Intergovernmental Relations on Implementation of Legislative Reforms in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1975), p 4.

[2]International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Rural Development Sector Policy Paper* (Washington: World Bank, 1975), p 29.

[3]L. Gray Cowan, 'The Political and Administrative Setting for Rural Development', in F. S. Arkhurst (ed), *Africa in Seventies and Eighties* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp 87–129, quote at p 88.

bination of elements included in programmes and projects and the '. . . distribution of opportunity extended to different groups within the rural community.'[1]

Second, political support is needed to ensure high priority for rural development objectives in routine administrative decisions. The continuous attention, indeed, the almost singleminded commitment, of political leaders is required to transform equity plans into programmes of action. The lack of political support in Sri Lanka, for example, aborted national attempts to initiate rural development. Kanesalingham points out that a succession of plans 'were generally not implemented – that they lapsed soon after their formulation . . .' simply because no forceful political pressures directed the allocation of resources and the machinery of government toward accomplishing policy objectives.[2] The structure of the political system – a parliamentary coalition of contending minority parties – could not sustain political support, and frequent changes in government left rural development plans in a state of continuous uncertainty, ignored by cabinet ministers, the bureaucracy and local government leaders and elites. On the other hand, partly because of the persistence of President Ayub Khan, Pakistan was more successful in launching an extensive rural development programme and in reallocating national resources to rural areas. Khan's commitment to the Basic Democracies Programme placed political support behind government actions to restructure the bureaucracy and organizational framework in rural areas, and to redirect the flow of resources to them.[3] Political commitment is required, finally, to break the barriers of entrenched interests preventing the redistribution of resources necessary for rural transformation. Mathur argues that, in India, 'vested interests already entrenched in the rural society and rising new agricultural classes have been mainly responsible for insulating the poor from the benefits of development. It has not been possible for the government to penetrate this barrier.'[4] Rural elites generally promote programmes from which they will benefit and block those likely to change the rural social or economic structure. By using political contacts at the national level, Indian elites can generally '. . . distort or twist the objectives of the programme as well as procedures for implementation,' and redirect the flow of benefits toward themselves. When distortion at the national level is not possible, they attempt to block implementation or undermine administrative agencies within the state and if that fails, elites provide temporary, superficial support and then undermine the programme in the villages. In India, Mathur contends 'the end result of all of this is that while pockets of development programmes are seen at the level of the elite, little change takes place at the societal level.'[5]

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[1] *Idem.*

[2] See V. Kanesalingham, 'The Impact of Government Policies and Programmes on Villages in Sri Lanka', in Asian Center for Development Administration (ACDA), *Approaches to Rural Development in Asia: The South Asian Experience* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: ACDA, 1975), pp 63–166, quote at p 116.

[3] See Shahid Javid Burki, 'Rural Development in Pakistan,' in ACDA *op cit*, pp 167–224.

[4] Kuldeep Mathur, 'Administrative Institutions, Political Capacity and India's Strategy for Rural Development', in ACDA, *op cit*, Vol III, pp 1–62, quote at p 52.

[5] *Ibid*, p 53.

National planning, programming and organizational inputs

The very nature of integrated development – demanding a wide variety of administrative policy, financial and technical inputs – increases pressure on national government planning and organizational machinery. Such programmes are both technically and organizationally complex; substantive contributions from a myriad of governmental agencies must be properly combined and sequenced in order to be mutually reinforcing. Public as well as private organizations provide critical inputs. Both government and private institutions affect price systems and the availability of capital. Marketing institutions, extension services and research organizations influence the discovery, dispersion and adaptation of new agricultural technologies; banks, credit unions, cooperatives and other financial institutions control the flow of funds to both the project organization and rural beneficiaries of the programme. Transportation, transfer and storage firms control the distribution of increased production resulting from agricultural projects. '[It] is vitally important to expand the entire complex of services and industries required to achieve the higher production,' Clifton Wharton concludes from a decade's experience with the Green Revolution in Asia. "Any government or agency which distributes the 'miracle' seed but fails to provide the insecticide and fertilizer in the appropriate quantities when and where needed is courting political disaster. Unless these inputs are available and used, some local traditional varieties will out-yield the new ones".'[1]

The organizational complexity of a single aspect of integrated rural development can be staggering. The Agrarian Reform Programme of the Philippines, for example, established to improve land tenure, develop agricultural and physical infrastructure, strengthen local institutions, improve farm management and deliver technical training to farmers, required institutional cooperation among at least 16 major government agencies and coordination of financial resources from at least another 10 government or quasi-public financial institutions. Studies of rural development in 18 countries, evaluated by Uphoff and Esman, found that among those functions generally performed at the national level are: (1) overall national, sectoral and budgetary planning; (2) assessment of needs and requirements for rural development and preparation of ministry programmes; (3) collection of taxes used to support rural activities and the allocation of central government financial resources to local projects; (4) negotiation, acquisition and distribution of foreign aid to local programmes; (5) identification, planning and delivery of technical and functional services to rural areas (e.g., importing technology, providing extension, health, education and other social services), and construction of physical infrastructure, irrigation and other agricultural facilities; (6) planning and programming agricultural production for various regions within the country and for specific commodities; (7) control over the organization and operation of rural development programmes, and delegation of authority to subordinate implementation units; (8) provision of technical, administrative and supervisory personnel for training or

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[1]Clifton Wharton, Jr, 'The Green Revolution: Cornucopia or Pandora's Box?' *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 47, No 3 (April 1969), pp 464–76, quote at p 469.

participation in programme implementation; and (9) transmission or settlement of claims or disputes in rural areas.[1]

If projects are to be implemented successfully under organizationally complex conditions, national governments must provide five major sets of inputs: adequate administrative support through national ministries and their field offices, effective planning and programming procedures, a stable and adequate flow of national budgetary resources, organizational capacity to coordinate and implement programmes, and decentralized administrative arrangements.

Administrative Support

The commitment of administrative support, even to clearly defined, high-priority development programmes, cannot merely be assumed. Indeed, ministries and autonomous agencies often block implementation of rural development programmes, or, by providing only passive support, seriously delay their progress. Problems in obtaining administrative commitment can arise at a variety of points in a programme's life cycle: during initial decisions regarding its establishment, in translating broad development policies into operating programmes, in obtaining resources, approvals and general cooperation from operating ministries during programme execution, and in evaluating overall performance.

Experience with the Kenya Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) is instructive, for after nearly two years of careful planning, the national bureaucracy delayed programme implementation and attempted to prevent it from obtaining needed financial and administrative resources. The cautiousness of senior staff at ministry headquarters about using SRDP as a vehicle for innovation not only delayed implementation but was reflected in the negative attitudes of field staff toward experiments which did not appeal to their own professional interests. 'The longer term results,' one observer notes, 'were a lack of direction and punch which made it difficult to break bottlenecks at ministry headquarters, particularly over the release of funds and the supply of resources.'[2]

In Lesotho, an agricultural mechanization programme (FARMECH) had to be carried out almost entirely by local government councils because national ministries would not provide administrative resources. The original plans of the Department of Local Government assumed that the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Cooperatives would support the project with financial and technical assistance, but as one analyst notes, '. . . neither of these supports materialized; it would appear that there was not sufficient unity of government policy for the intentions of the three departments to be coordinated before plans were drawn up or

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[1]See Norman T. Uphoff and Milton J. Esman, *Local Organization for Rural Development: Analysis of the Asian Experience* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Center for International Studies, 1974), who identify these types of national inputs from 18 case studies of the role of government in rural areas.

[2]J. W. Leach, 'The Kenya Special Rural Development Programme', *Journal of Administration Overseas*, Vol 13, No 2 (April 1974), pp 358–65, quote at p 360.

held consistent while they were implemented. Furthermore, the technical departments had no professional interest in local government. . . .'[1] Instead, personnel in the national ministries, who felt that the Department of Local Government was attempting to encroach on their functions argued that farm mechanization was not feasible. The project proceeded slowly and 'had no help at all from other departments until the signs of its success were unmistakable.'[2]

National Planning and Programming

Because integrated rural development programmes are both technically and organizationally complex, and because their success depends so heavily on the political and administrative support of public and private institutions at the national, regional and local levels, strong central planning and programming are essential. Most studies of rural development emphasize the importance of establishing or expanding national planning capacity, for without central direction and coordination, disparate inputs will not be integrated to achieve national goals. Uma Lele's evaluation of rural development programmes in Africa notes that their '. . . multiple and, at times, conflicting objectives have rendered overall rural development strategy inconsistent and sometimes even self-defeating.' The role of government planning, she concludes, must therefore be to reconcile, . . . 'the needs for growth as well as for broadening participation and of finding a coherent rural development strategy which is politically feasible and economically sound and can be implemented administratively.'[3]

But traditional forms of national macro-economic planning have generally failed to influence policy implementation or to guide development toward the goals of growth with equity. The weaknesses of conventional planning in Kenya as described by the World Bank's Economic Mission, are characteristic of the process in most developing nations. '. . . The emphasis in macro-economic planning has tended to be on the production of a published plan', the Mission notes, 'at the expense of the plan as an implementable programme of action. The private sector has been incorporated only peripherally; plans have had little project content; policy proposals are not always previously agreed upon; and plan programmes have been frequently discarded during subsequent preparation of budgets'. Neither political leaders nor organized interest groups actively joined in plan formulation, and . . . 'even the major operating ministries have not always participated fully in the preparation of plans or monitored the implementation of their own programmes.[4]'

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[1]Sandra Wallman, 'The Farmech Scheme: Basutoland (Lesotho)', *African Affairs*, Vol 67, No 267 (April 1968), pp 112–18, quote at p 114.

[2]*Idem.*

[3]Uma Lele, *The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p 142.

[4]International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Kenya: Into the Second Decade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p 387.

Experience with rural development in Africa suggests that although national planning must provide centralized direction, it must also admit a high level of decentralized analysis in order to account for local needs, constraints, values and opportunities for rural transformation and to consider in decisions the knowledge and information concerning the rural social system that is often available only within rural regions.[1]

General agreement exists among evaluators of national development planning that its value lies more in the process than in the generation of a plan. Swerdlow, for instance, argues that planning involves '. . . consciously developing a sequence of future actions to achieve specified goals,' and as such should be a continuous process of 'gathering, selecting and ordering information, of judging priorities and relationships and of initiating activities that lead to expected achievements.'[2] The application of analysis and forethought to problems of rural development, by major groups concerned with, affected by or needed to ameliorate the problems, would make the planning process a more effective instrument for gathering and guiding action. Conventional approaches to national planning are often ineffective in guiding rural development activities because they focus on national macro-economic forces rather than on the micro-economic, social, cultural and human dynamics that influence individual behavior and institutional change in rural areas. Weitz, analyzing Israel's experience with rural transformation, argues that 'the planning method required to accomplish the institutional changes which form the essence of development . . . [must] be geared, first and foremost, toward people, their potentialities and their motivations.'[3] In the Israeli programme, national planners considered the purposes of production in different types of agricultural systems, the characteristics of rural work schedules, sources of capital and income, the level of farmers' agricultural knowledge and skills, linkages between farm and market, as well as patterns of social interaction among rural people and government institutions.[4]

But macro-economic planning cannot be effective unless it disaggregates analysis and injects it into more precise and meaningful subplans directly addressing rural policy problems. A hierarchy of analytical functions must be performed including macro-planning that surveys major economic and social forces influencing national development; sector planning which determines the needs, constraints and potentials of specific elements of the national economy; and functional planning that attempts to deal with multi-sectoral, national problems such as employment expansion, urbanization, and manpower development. Programme planning, concerned with designing and implementing specific sets of activities for ameliorating functional, sectoral and national problems, must be supplemented with project planning that focuses on the identification, design, appraisal, organization

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[1]Lele, *op cit*, pp 143–44.

[2]Irving Swerdlow, *The Public Administration of Economic Development* (New York: Praeger, 1975), pp 241–42.

[3]Raanan Weitz, *From Peasant to Farmer: A Revolutionary Strategy for Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p 176.

[4]*Ibid*, pp 19–28.

and implementation of particular activities and investments for achieving programme goals. Rural development requires integrated planning and programming at each level.[1]

Thus, developing nations need additional planning capacity in order to implement equity policies, but not just more planning for the sake of planning. They need planning that balances centralized control with decentralized participation, a process that focuses on local conditions, needs and patterns of human behavior, combining appropriate and multiple levels of analysis, linked directly to implementation.

Budgetary Resources

A steady and reliable flow of national budget resources is one of the most important inputs for rural development. That financial support will be provided by the national government once it commits itself to a policy of rural transformation is too often simply assumed. But programmes, even when they have had strong political and administrative support, are regularly beset by a paucity of operating funds. The agrarian reform programmes of the Philippines, for instance, traditionally given high political priority by national leaders, have suffered annual budgetary shortfalls for more than a decade. Between 1965 and 1971 the Philippine executive branch released less than a third of the amount appropriated by the legislature for agrarian reform, the percentage of the national budget devoted to agricultural development actually dropped by 50 per cent in 1972, and inflation in the early 1970s steadily eroded the value of rural development allocations.[2]

Budgetary investments in agriculture may be low even in countries where agriculture is the most important sector of the economy, contributing the most to national production, and where the population is overwhelmingly rural. In Ethiopia, for instance, less than 7 per cent of central government expenditures go to agriculture. In Nicaragua, basically a rural nation almost totally dependent on agricultural production, the sector's share of public funds declined at a time when overall government capital and operating expenditures were increasing. Officials and field personnel of the agricultural agencies have never been able to provide even minimal services owing to inadequate budgetary resources, and many agencies must allocate as much as three-fourths of their annual allocations for salaries and wages, dividing the small remainder between operating and capital expenditures.[3]

The differences between amounts budgeted for rural development and the funds actually released can be enormous. In the Dominican Republic, for example, between 1966 and 1973, the percentage of the budget allocations released to the Secretariat of Agriculture ranged from a low of 36 to a high of 96 per cent, with

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[1] Swerdlow, *op cit.*

[2] J. E. Rocamora and C. Conti-Panganiban, 'Rural Development Strategies: The Philippine Case', in ACDA, *Approaches to Rural Development in Asia*, Vol II, pp 267–68.

[3] US Agency for International Development, *Nicaragua – Rural Development Sector Loan*, Capital Assistance Paper, AID-DLC/P-2091 (Washington: AID, 1975), Annex V-C.

over $40 million withheld during an eight-year period.[1] Most executing agencies in the Dominican Republic were hard pressed to perform even routine duties because of financial uncertainties. 'Except for salaries, each budgetary allocation is obtained as a consequence of a lengthy justification process which results in project execution by fits and starts,' one observer concludes. 'Agency heads are forced to borrow from one project to support another. The budgetary resource flow process represents a significant constraint on development.'[2]

Among the most important budgetary problems facing developing nations are the lack of data and information on actual budgetary allocations to the ministries and agencies that implement development policy; long delays in allotted budget funds reaching provincial and local field offices because of inefficient disbursement systems; and, difficulties in obtaining non-personal services allocations at appropriate times during the fiscal year. In most developing nations, moreover, the lack of flexibility in fiscal procedures makes it impossible for ministries and field agencies to use allocated resources for innovative, contingency or unprogrammed expenditures. Financial management is hampered, in addition, by the failure of many line agencies to submit requests at the proper time, in standard format, and with adequate supporting documents, leading either to serious delays in receiving disbursements or to the refusal of budget authorities to consider requests; and by overly complex budget procedures established by the central government for submitting requests, especially for capital and equipment expenditures. Fragmentation of budget authority, and the ability of autonomous agencies, commissions and boards to shelter their budgetary resources through special funds and direct appropriations, work to the disadvantage of line agencies. Finally, the failure of budget authorities to release allocated funds to rural development ministries and field agencies in time to be spent by the end of the fiscal year, is an informal means of cutting their spending power.

Some countries are seeking ways to link more closely planning, programming and budgeting, to ensure a steady flow of funds to development projects and programmes; experiments that should be monitored and evaluated by international assistance agencies for their replicability. The Government of Nicaragua, for instance, is experimenting with Sectoral Planning Units within the ministries to monitor and control budgetary resources. The unit within the Ministry of Agriculture is directly responsible for multi-year planning, programme and project design, collecting and analyzing information to assist field agencies in the preparation of budget requests. The budget division assists public agricultural institutions to prepare and analyze their budget proposals, trains agency officials and staff in proper financial procedures, and advises the Minister on budget issues and on the allocation of resources from the National Rural Development Fund. The division is thus designed to play a major role in analyzing needed resources and ensuring disbursement to rural field units responsible for policy implementation.[3]

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[1] J. B. Robinson and J. M. Stone, *Agricultural Sector Assessment for the Dominican Republic* (Washington: USAID, 1974), p v–18.

[2] *Idem.*

[3] USAID, *Nicaragua – Rural Development Sector Loan*, pp 121–23.

Decentralized Administrative Structure and Coordinating Capacity

Two other closely related national inputs are needed to implement integrated rural development: arrangements for administering rural programmes at the subnational level, through delegation of authority to provincial, regional or district governments or through a system of field officers of national ministries; and an effective system for programme coordination and control. Because integrated rural development requires a variety of inputs from diverse sources, mechanisms must be established to guide the activities of organizations toward national policy objectives. Yet, at the same time, complex organizational interaction makes central administration and coordination difficult. Thus functions must often be delegated, both to increase their efficiency and to build the institutional capacity of local organizations. Uphoff and Esman, in an extensive analysis of local organization in rural development, evaluating 18 Asian case studies undertaken by Cornell University's Rural Development Committee, concluded that rural programmes in every country are the responsibility of a mixture of public and private institutions and that the complementarities among those organizations are as important to the success of rural development as the functions performed by each institution. 'While there are isolated instances of local organizations taking initiative, mobilizing resources and accomplishing certain development objectives, in most countries considered, the cumulative effects of such efforts has been negligible,' they report. 'What count are *systems or networks* of organization, both vertically and horizontally, that make local development more than an enclave phenomenon.'[1]

The implications of the Cornell Rural Development Committees' studies are that improving agricultural production and increasing the standards of living among the rural poor requires that central government and local resources be matched with those of private sector and political organizations; that improving service delivery and development activities depends on establishing and strengthening linkages among central, provincial, and local government and private organizations; and that linkages are established and maintained between and among organizations through continuous interaction and exchange of information and other resources. The studies also found that the mixture of organizational inputs for rural development from national administration, local organizations, private sector and political institutions varies widely from country to country, but in nearly all countries each type of organization performs some essential functions.

There are a number of channels for decentralizing administration of rural development – through central government, a combination of central and local government institutions, or cooperative government-private organizational arrangements. Programme evaluations, however, most often recommend decentralization through regional development authorities or through ministry field offices and provincial and local governments, with regional coordination by commissions or councils.

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[1]Norman T. Uphoff and Milton J. Esman, *Local Organization for Rural Development: Analysis of Asian Experience* (Ithaca: Cornell University Center for International Studies, 1974), pp 12–13.

Regions, as a base for decentralized administration and coordination, have several important advantages:[1]

i Regional decntralization allows rural development plans and programmes to be tailored to the particular needs of heterogeneous areas within a single country. Since regions differ widely in economic conditions, sociocultural traditions, natural resource endowments, physical characteristics and potential for development, regionalization of planning and administration permits consideration of unique areal characteristics;

ii Regions provide convenient units for analysis for disaggregating national development goals and targets for devising procedures and analytical techniques appropriate to each area's conditions and needs;

iii Decentralization of administrative functions to the regional level allows greater opportunity for participation in programme planning and project implementation by local groups that will be affected by development activities:

iv Regional administrative units have potentially greater opportunities to test innovations and to experiment with new policies in specific areas without having to justify those activities for the country as a whole;

v Regions provide a convenient geographical base for coordinating the activities of a wide variety of specialized ministerial programmes and projects in an integrated manner;

vi Administrative regions provide logical units for collecting and analyzing data and information needed to plan and execute rural development programmes;

vii A region is a suitable administrative area for monitoring, controlling and evaluating the effects of development projects and programmes;

viii Regional administrative jurisdictions can be effective channels of communications between central government agencies and local governments and for mobilizing local political support for national development activities;

and

ix Regions provide a convenient administrative structure for allocating government investment and operating resources to decrease inequities and spur the development of economically lagging areas.

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[1]See J. W. Durston, 'Regional Socio-Economic Development: A "Conceptual Framework",' *International Social Development Review*, No 4 (1972), pp 3–10; United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, *Planning for Urban and Regional Development in Asia and the Far East* (New York: United Nations, 1971); United Nations, 'Regional Development Planning', *Economic Bulletin for Asia and the Far East*, Vol XXXIII, No 2 (September 1972), pp 1–9; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Selected Experiences in Regional Development* (New York: United Nations, 1970); John Friedman, *Urbanization Planning and National Development* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973).

In many developing nations, regional decentralization is preferable to local devolution, both as a long-range means of coordinating central government activities at the subnational level and as an intermediate step in building the institutional capacity of local governments. But little attention has been given in the new development strategies, by either international agencies or national governments, to improving subnational administrative capacity. Regional planning is complex, and experience reveals as many failures as successes. To be effective, regional development agencies must expand their information collection and analysis capabilities. Strong political commitment from the national government should accompany a large measure of financial autonomy and administrative flexibility to respond to unique regional problems. In addition, such agencies must be staffed with well-trained and highly motivated people capable of dealing with local officials and farmers, and of coordinating the work of operating ministries within the region.

Ultimately, centralization must be balanced with decentralization in the administration of rural development programmes. The linkages and interactions needed to implement equity strategies must be created and strengthened over time, as Uphoff and Esman argue, through increasing specialization: public and private, national and local government organizations must perform those functions in which they have potential comparative advantages. 'Decentralization is not an all-or-nothing proposition but rather a matter of *kinds and degrees*,' they note. 'Put more generally, decentralization is best seen and implemented in terms of specific functions. Different rural development tasks are better handled at higher or at lower levels of decision-making, separately or in combination with other tasks.'[1]

National Policy Support

Experience with rural development programmes and projects over the past decade also clearly demonstrates that a single programme or even a portfolio of projects aimed at ameliorating rural poverty will have little effect. Success depends on the ability of the national government to orient major policies, clearly and deliberately, toward the goal of growth with equity, considering the impact of each on rural productivity, income distribution, and human welfare, and on the linkages between urban and rural sectors. National economic, social, technical and financial policies must provide direct and continuous support for the goals of rural development in order for individual programmes and projects to bring about structural change. The International Labour Organization's studies of Colombia, Kenya and the Philippines unequivocally show that a delicate balance must be struck in national policy-making between the goals of growth in GNP and those of attaining greater social and spatial equity.[2] Among national policies needed to support the new development strategies are:

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[1]See Uphoff and Esman, *op cit*, p 76.

[2]See International Labour Office, *Towards Full Employment: A Programme for Colombia* (Geneva: ILO, 1970); *Employment Incomes and Equality: A Strategy for Increasing Production Employment in Kenya* (Geneva: ILO, 1972); Starting in Development; *A Programme of Employment, Equity and Growth for the Philippines* (Geneva: ILO, 1974).

i *Land reform* measures that promote an equitable distribution of land ownership, with opportunities for rural workers to acquire enough land to support their families and to produce agricultural surpluses, while generally ensuring that individual landholdings are of an appropriate size to increase agricultural productivity;

ii *Investment incentives* to promote small- and intermediate-size industry, crafts and cottage industries, labour intensive manufacturing and processing in rural areas in order to absorb labour, while at the same time assisting those large industries that produce the intermediate and capital goods forming the economic bases of most larger cities;

iii Noninflationary *wage policies* that encourage and protect labour-intensive industries while assuring an adequate level of income for individual workers to meet their basic consumption needs, to maintain the consumption levels of lower-income groups threatened by inflation and to offer a reasonable opportunity for the lowest income groups to raise their overall standards of living;

iv *Price supports* for essential agricultural commodities that provide incentives for individual farmers to increase agricultural output, to experiment with new methods and techniques, to adapt improved practices and higher yielding seed varieties without fear of catastrophic losses in income owing to drastic price fluctuations;

v A progressive and equitable *tax policy* that allows reasonable levels of earned profits without concentrating wealth in the hands of a small minority of the population, and encourages redistribution of wealth in order to provide opportunities for advancement among the poorest elements of society without discouraging entrepreneurship among middle-income groups. Non-essential imported luxuries should be taxed at higher rates, with lower rates levied on essential consumption and production goods. Tax policies should not distort production decisions in favor of capital-intensive methods;

vi A strong *family planning* policy that seeks to reduce birth rates below potential rates of growth in production;

and

vii *A public works and social services investment policy* that provides basic levels of health, educational and other services appropriate for rural and urban populations and that ensures adequate physical infrastructure to encourage and facilitate, rural production. Public works programmes should hire seasonally unemployed agricultural workers, and encourage services and facilities to locate so as to build linkages between urban and rural centers and provide access to services and facilities to the largest possible number of rural people.

Without national policies promoting structural change, investment of scarce national resources and of international assistance funds in integrated rural development simply will not achieve growth with equity.

International Economic Policy and Foreign Assistance

Two other preconditions determine the success of integrated development policies: international economic and trade policies and international financial and technical assistance that support equity goals.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND TRADE POLICY

Rural development is not entirely a national problem; many factors reinforcing and perpetuating rural poverty stem from adverse patterns of international investment and trade. Current policies often undermine domestic efforts to promote integrated rural development and to build an articulated spatial system linking together urban and rural places in a national economy.

Although detailed analysis of policy alternatives is beyond the scope of this discussion, among the actions that national governments must consider are: (1) Establishing and maintaining an appropriate currency exchange rate that both dampens domestic inflation and makes exports of agricultural and small-scale rural industrial goods competitive in the world market; (2) modifying import restrictions and tariff rates to protect vital labour-intensive industries serving domestic markets in their start-up periods, while allowing export industries to obtain, at competitive prices, the necessary raw materials to produce exportable finished products; (3) creating a favorable foreign trade climate that encourages international corporations to participate in joint ventures with local firms on a mutual benefit basis, and which through labour-itensive production expands jobs for local labour and managerial personnel, increases local technological and administrative capacity and broadens local labour skills to produce goods and services for export and domestic markets; (4) expanding export promotion programmes to widen foreign markets for new domestic goods and commodities produced in rural areas and in small and intermediate size towns; and (5) avoiding import substitution policies that protect high-cost, capital intensive industries, which commonly intensify income disparties by not using rural labour.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

How national governments use foreign aid, and the willingness of donor agencies to be flexible and innovative in providing support, are also critical factors determining the success of the new development strategies. As the International Labour Office notes, '. . . foreign assistance from the purely quantitative point of view can be used either to assist in the structural change a country may have decided on, or to help a country to continue somewhat longer on an outworn traditional path.'[1] But unfortunately, lending policies have served to reinforce, rather than change, traditional trends. Much of the international lending to developing countries is characterized by the same features that have marked aid to Kenya: "There has been a strong tendency to concentrate on clearly defined and fairly large projects with high 'inaugurability,' considerable central urban bias, limited concern for distributional and social effects, and preference for little or no local cost financing," the ILO observes. 'Many donors have successfully tried to promote their own

[1] ILO, *Sharing in Development*, *op cit*, pp 293–94.

exporters and contractors, the consultant device sometimes being a means to this end. Little thought has been given to technological aspects, innovatory features and consequently effects on employment.'[1]

International assistance, as a supporting input for integrated rural development, must be modified to promote and encourage national governments to undertake policy reforms leading to structural changes in the economy. International assistance agencies following a more innovative and flexible approach could, for instance, provide short-term infusions of financial assistance ('ballooning' of aid) to countries undertaking major rural policy reforms that would mitigate the possible short-term adversities involved in change.[2] Aid could be used, as the ILO suggests for the Philippines, to help countries with severe current or potential food problems to build up 'buffer stocks' to relieve pressures on foreign exchange reserves during years with poor agricultural yields. The domestic funds saved by not having to import essential staples could be used to provide continuity in financing ongoing rural development reforms, especially in countries not self-sufficient in production and where budgetary stability is critical to the existence of fledgling rural projects and programmes.[3] Donors must evaluate those procedures which operate against their own and the developing countries' growth-with-equity strategy. Again, the ILO argues that 'just as it is necessary to narrow the gap between rhetoric and reality in terms of what governments say to their own people, so it is necessary to narrow the gap between what donor agencies say and what they do.' This involves, the ILO argues, eliminating preferred 'import content of projects only' policies, a willingness to finance local costs and to undertake programme and sector lending as well as to untie aid, permit local consultants to do feasibility studies and to consider alternative local technologies.[4]

Since many of the programmes and projects undertaken as part of an integrated rural development strategy are experimental, risky and complex, they require soft loans and grants in their initial stages. Increased use of concessional lending by major assistance agencies would greatly encourage developing nations to undertake more innovative rural development projects, and contribute to the relief of growing debt service burdens in the poorest Third World countries.

Conclusions

Indeed, the entire growth-with-equity strategy should be viewed as a complex social experiment to be approached through carefully designed, highly selective pilot projects. Two types of experimental lending schemes should be supported by international agencies. The first would concentrate intensive technical assistance in agricultural production, integrated spatial development and creation of marketing and financial networks in those countries that have demonstrated strong political

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[1] ILO, *Employment, Incomes and Equity*, *op cit*, pp 573–74.

[2] ILO, *Sharing in Development*, *op cit*, p 396.

[3] *Idem.*

[4] *Idem.*

commitment and administrative support for growth-with-equity policy by enacting redistribution legislation and establishing the organizational infrastructure for delivering services and inputs to rural areas. Large-scale sectoral and programme loans – supplemented with specific technical assistance projects – would be made to the few countries able to manifest such commitment, allowing international agencies to test basic assumptions, technical requirements and organizational arrangements for integrated rural development under politically favorable conditions.

The second would be a two-phased experiment in the poorest developing nations where some political support exists but where administrative and financial capacity is low. In these countries, international assistance agencies should first focus on consolidating political support and then expanding administrative capacity. Assistance would be provided in drafting national policies supporting redistribution and structural change, promoting administrative reform, developing technical and managerial capability, establishing arrangements for decentralized administration and control, strengthening planning and budgeting procedures and tailoring external financing flexibly to meet unique national problems and needs. Only then would advanced technical assistance in agricultural and rural development contribute to growth with equity.

Experimental programmes in a few developing countries would allow a large enough concentration of resources to have a significant impact on reducing urban and rural poverty, provide testing sites for various combinations or packages of technical and organizational inputs, generate intensive experience essential for replication on a broader scale, and promote demonstration effects that might increase political and administrative support for integrated development in other countries.

Approaching growth-with-equity policy experimentally through a selective and intensive group of pilot projects in countries where conditions are favorable or where favorable conditions are most likely to be created, provides the only hope for transforming rhetoric into action. From the experience with rural development thus far, one conclusion is clear: Achieving growth with equity is not merely a technical problem to be solved by increasing agricultural output and rural employment. It is a complex social problem requiring fundamental changes in the social, economic and spatial structures of developing nations, for which strong political commitment and pervasive administrative support are basic preconditions.

Book Reviews

Patterns of Administrative Development in Independent India, E. N. MANGAT RAI; *University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies. Commonwealth Paper No.* 19 (*Athlone Press*, 1976); £4.50.

The author, a member of the I.C.S. (1937–1971), served at District, State and Union level, and was Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, and also to the Government of Kashmir. As he clearly states, the chapters of this book, save for the Introduction and the last Chapter (which are more general) mainly reflect his personal experience of the main jobs which he did. This gives vividness and authenticity to his account and variety to the types of administrative problem with which he deals. Incidentally, it also gives room for a great deal of information (e.g. about the partition of the Punjab, the formation of Haryana, the ethnic, religious, and linguistic situation in Kashmir) which will be new to those who have not worked long years in India or studied these areas professionally. In the closing chapter ('Patterns of Administrative Change') he adds some more general and penetrating reflections.

We are lucky to have this account, which is thoughtful, perceptive, well-written and clearly written throughout. It is a professional's book, too detailed and undramatic for those who might want stirring denunciations or revelations. Yet more than once the author puts in succint form ideas which have only been vaguely perceived by most commentators. He notes, for example, that the British Raj, in many ways so admirable in its concentration on the very centre of Indian life – the life of the village – in fact failed to build up any effective contact whatever with the growing middle class of India – business and the professions – who were not primarily interested in District Administration and all the familiar doings of District Collectors and Magistrates, Tensildars*, Patwaris, Executive Engineers and Police.

This prompts a comment on two of the major themes of the book as a whole (alas, there is not space for several more) – to wit, the decline of the emphasis on the District and the supreme place of the District Collector/Magistrate, and the effects of the introduction of political democracy and politicians when the British Administration (for such it was) ceased. And these two themes are closely connected.

*This book is primarily about N. India.

First, the District. It is, after all, 'only' a District – a unit (1 million plus) of *local* administration, and, with the exception of the major town Districts, of rural administration. It is interesting that the author hints at a missed opportunity to turn it into a unit of Local Government, of which the Collector/Magistrate might have become (my words) the County Clerk or Chief Executive, supported by (his words) sub-divisional officers of IAS rank and training rather than Block Development Officers of much lower degree. But both politicians and business entrepreneurs became interested much more in the State and Union level, where economic and commercial planning took place, and where politicians sought careers and publicity. As the Magistracy gradually became more separate from the Collectorship, and since a Collector was a revenue collector ('only' a tax man?) the decline might have been even steeper if the District Collector/Magistrate had not also been Deputy Commissioner and, as such, the coordinator of Departmental action at District level; for in this capacity the D.C. has been used (over-used almost to the point of extinction) as the pivot for the development programme, through which major funds and major State and Union projects are executed. But other factors have contributed to decline – the larger numbers of the IAS (1500 ICS at Independence, 3500 IAS now), the higher pay and better prospects of jobs in State or Union Secretariat, and above all, the dominance of politicians (both MPs and MLAs) across the whole country.

Politics – the supremacy of elected indigenous legislators and Party henchmen – were new to the whole tradition of Indian administration as the successor, in form and attitudes, to British Administration. Not entirely new at Independence, for, in the late 30s, many a British administrator in 'his' District was startled (often enraged) by the invasion of 'his' sphere by some domineering(!) Congressman. Politics, on its 'good' side, meant new economic programmes, development, a national social philosophy (eschewed by the British as not their business). Politics on its more tiresome side meant politicians building up clientele, and therefore plaguing the District administration for jobs, transfers, licences for their supporters. It meant even an underground war between some politicians and some administrators.

Politics at the centre meant more personalisation – more reflection of a powerful Minister's views and ambitions; and this cut across the strong tradition of the civil service of presenting most carefully analysed long briefs, with clear recommendations of what choice should be made between clearly stated alternatives, not forgetting consistency, precedent, and the side effects on various Departmental programmes and decisions. Without clear and coordinated political guidance, the Administration began to be hesitant and unsure of itself, to play for safety, to fear the 'Public Enquiry' or Commission if something went wrong.

Politics in the sense of major economic and social decisions by men responsible to an electorate and public opinion seem to most people necessary and good. Politics in the sense of Party struggles for power and patronage, and literally a struggle at all costs (including cost to the public weal) are a different matter, and one destructive of good administration. Although the author does not say this outright, the implica-

tion of his story seems to be that Indian politicians, taking for granted an Administration which would soldier on to keep the country on its feet, in fact plundered this stability for their own ambitions and power-struggle.

In fact – and this the author does say – they began to destroy stability, leading to a deepening crisis of indiscipline, instability, lowered standards of work, industrial effort, performance, in many spheres. The book was finished before Mrs Gandi's coup. It is the more genuinely prophetic for the lack of hindsight. What the author has said in his closing pages is an eloquent and perceptive prelude to the real events which followed.

GUY HUNTER

Inside India Today, DILIP HIRO; *Routledge and Kegan Paul* 1976; pp xiii, 331; £6.95.

Dilip Hiro is a writer and journalist who has been concerned for some years both with Indian affairs and with the immigrant community in Britain. In *Inside India Today* he sets out to provide a comprehensive survey of that country's politics which will be useful to the general reader. There have been a number of similar books in the past, but none very recently, although the State of Emergency imposed in June 1975 will doubtless produce several more. Hiro's material includes a number of interviews which he carried out in 1970–72, but his study of the daily and weekly Indian press carried him forward to the present and he is able to include several chapters on the origins and workings of the Emergency. The major part of the book is however devoted to an analysis of the political system as it has developed since colonial times. The framework is the broad conflict between on the one hand the landlord, the moneylender, and the monopoly capitalist, and on the other the poor peasant, the industrial worker, and the white-collar worker. Hiro points out how the gap between the two has widened in the past few years, although he pays little attention to conflicts within each, for example over the price to be paid for the farmer's crops.

An account is given of the various organized groups on the left and right of the political spectrum, but Hiro naturally focuses on the Congress party and its leadership. He points to Mrs Gandhi's repeated tendency to talk left and act right, although there would be few Third World leaders of whom this was not to some extent true, and to the close relationship between business interests and the party, but he does not do full justice to Congress's unique ability to neutralize many of the potential leaders of discontent. In particular he does not analyse in detail the local structures of power, nor does he really show why the trade unions have been so weak. It is not enough to describe Congress merely as a 'centrist party'.

Within Hiro's framework the main threat to Mrs Gandhi comes from the left, and he is convinced that whether or not economic conditions improve, militant communist forces will increasingly challenge the regime. In fact, these forces were effectively crushed by 1972, at least in the short term, and the Emergency was

directed principally against right wing political forces. Elite theory rather than Marxism may better explain the events of the last couple of years, although the effective cut in the living standards of many workers since 1975 may help to precipitate a new type of confrontation.

Oversimplification is perhaps inevitable in a work of this kind, but there are other flaws in Hiro's book. The writing is often pedestrian, and the reportage at the beginning is dull compared to V. S. Naipaul or Dom Moraes. It is often inaccurate in detail, particularly but not only when dealing with the colonial period. Hiro is wrong to claim in his preface that his is the first book to advocate a total overhaul of the Indian state through revolution – one has only to think of the works of the Bergs, Gough and Sharma and Blackburn – nor are the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the United Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) the only repositories of political virtue. Yet despite these criticisms the book is marked by a quality of moral indignation, whose source one suspects is as much liberal as Marxist, which makes it worth reading by not only the general reader but also those who already know India.

DAVID TAYLOR

Agriculture and Structural Transformation – Economic Strategies in Late Developing Countries, BRUCE F. JOHNSTON and PETER KILBY; *Oxford University Press;* pp 474; £7.00.

This publication represents the fourth in Stanford University's Economic Development Series. Agriculture is used here in its wider sense to include the utilization of renewable natural resources, but without reaching too far into the complexities of the rural sector as a whole, embracing education, health and the infrastructure generally.

Few of the many volumes on economic development in the LDC's that have appeared in recent years have failed to pay attention to structural transformation, which is now accepted almost universally as a *sine qua non* even though the emphasis varies, amongst other things, in relation to the author's political persuasions. In this book, the approach is essentially pragmatic but focuses strongly upon the needs and potentialities of the small farmer.

It is particularly interesting because, while focusing upon agriculture, its authorship combines the skills and long experience of an agricultural economist and an industrial economist so as to embrace the critical interrelationships between growth and constraints in the utilization of agricultural and non-agricultural technology and their influence on rural incomes and living standards. It makes no attempt to predict the future but accepts the available evidence that for the foreseeable future the bulk of the population in the LDC's will continue to earn their living from the land despite the efforts that may be made to increase employment opportunities in other sectors.

The book almost succeeds in dividing itself naturally, that is with little contrivance by the reader, into four sequences. Chapters 1, 2 and 3, *Agriculture in a Traditional Economy*, *Structural Transformation*, and *On Being Late: The Technology Backlog*, respectively, constitute a general statement of the characteristics that are to a large extent common to LDC's, and an analysis of the ways in which transformation may be accelerated. Chapter 4, *The Design of an Agricultural Strategy* sets the pattern for the choice of historical analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 – England, the USA and Japan, and the three latecomers Taiwan, Mexico and the Soviet Union, respectively. (The choice cannot have been an easy one.) Chapters 7 and 8 go on to examine some of the major processes involved in structural transformation and the choice of agricultural strategies from the viewpoint of the manufacturing sector – chapters which should be recommended reasing for all agriculturalists. In the last two chapters, 9 and 10, *The Catching-Up Process* and *Intercountry Variations and the Choice of Strategy*, some of the threads from earlier chapters are drawn together, lessons and gaps in knowledge underlined and their implications on the choice of agricultural strategy examined.

Chapter 10, however, is something of an anti-climax and, indeed, the reader can be excused for wondering if the structure of the book itself would have benefited from some transformation. One does not expect to find a tidy list of conclusions and recommendations, although there are in fact a few well chosen prescriptions, but the *Final Reflections on the Choice of Strategy* in Chapter 10 contain elements that might almost be afterthoughts rather than a final distillation of the preceding analysis.

The Appendices are limited to five time series of data related to the country comparisons but each chapter is accompanied by its own generous but by no means overlong notes. Both a subject and a name index complete the volume.

For the serious student or planner whether at National, Sectoral or Regional level, this book provides a very valuable compendium of theory, information and analysis relevant to the evolution of appropriate policies. The analysis of the problems of being late and catching up is very apposite in the context of the current emphasis by the developing countries on the New Economic and Social Order. As the first paragraph of Chapter 10 reminds us, the exact design of an agricultural strategy must be location specific (and as is made clear in earlier chapters, agricultural strategy cannot be evolved in isolation from that of other sectors). Chapter 9 also begins with an important reminder to the over-zealous decision-maker and planner, that as the heart of the process of agricultural development (the authors actually use the doubtful word *modernization*) are the changes taking place on individual farms, the starting point is (or *was*, as the case may be) the traditional farmer. In this context, therefore, one would have welcomed a chapter devoted to services to the small farmer or at least more emphasis in the last three chapters to the institutional and procedural aspects of planning and their implications upon the mobilization of self-reliant action by farm *families* and rural communities. The *traditional* farmer at least is seldom the isolated entrepreneur that in this book he sometimes appears to be.

Similarly welcome would be more detailed attention to the decision-making and implementing processes, e.g. to the gap between declared objectives, terminal and intermediate, and between stated and actual selection of strategies, choice of means and their implementation, not least because the dominant thread in this book reflects Bruce Johnston's consistent, though in this case additionally qualified, advocacy over the past decade of the general appropriateness of a uni-modal rather than a bi-modal strategy.

Chapter 4, *The Design of an Agricultural Strategy*, in defining the concept of uni- and bi-modalism and the fundamental choice facing LDC's, begins with an apparent over-simplification of the issues, but by the end of the chapter this impression is dispelled. At the end of the book one is left with the thought, however, that some of the important qualifications and influences included in Chapter 10 could, with advantage to the reader at least, have been brought together at the beginning of Chapter 4. For a fuller examination of some of the powerful reasons why in practice, bi-modal tendencies in agricultural development are so common, even where strategies are ostensibly or even in practice designed to emphasise uni-modal development, the reader could well treat Michael Lipton's recent book* as a companion to *Agriculture and Structural Transformation.*

None of these minor criticisms should deter the reader from this very significant book. If it has no end, and a great many of the threads are left for the student to weave together for himself, this is surely in the professorial tradition which aims not so much to teach as to place knowledge within the reach of those who would learn.

P. W. STUTLEY

Strategic Highways of Africa, GUY ARNOLD and RUTH WEISS; *Julian Friedmann Publishers Ltd.*; pp 178; £5.95 hardback.

The subject of this book is a fascinating one. To quote from the foreword 'Highways have a vitality of their own and some of the international ones that serve the more troubled parts of present day Africa have political and strategic roles that give them an importance out of all proportion to their simple economic use as trade routes'. Recent developments in Southern Africa increase the potential significance of a work such as this.

Unfortunately the study emerges almost as a reference book. A good deal of information is provided in a concentrated form, but it is not easy for the reader to see the wood for the trees, perhaps because the authors have made little attempt to do so.

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*Why Poor People Stay Poor (reviewed in *The Journal of Administration Overseas*, Vol XVI, No 3.

The nature of the information provided considerable problems of presentation. Should the treatment be historical, each chapter dealing with a single period? Should each section deal with a specific highway or with a specific country. As it is, the historical dimension is largely lost. There is a tendency to concentrate on the last decade, once the origin of each highway has been described. The second question is never resolved; thus Chapter 5 is entitled 'The Zambezi' and Chapter 6 'Rhodesia'. Chapter 12 is 'Zaire' and Chapter 14 'The Trans-African Highway'.

Little attention is paid to West and Central Africa, and none to North Africa. This may not be merely a reflection of the author's interests and knowledge, but rather of the dominant significance of developments in Southern Africa in the last decade. Nevertheless the book should perhaps have been restricted solely to Southern Africa, and this fact reflected in the title.

Southern Africa is an enormously rich area for a study of this kind. The complex political, military and economic situation, so closely linked with spatial considerations, throws up almost too many subjects for detailed analysis – the Caprivi Strip and the Tanzam railway each deserve an extended treatment. The rapidity with which this situation is changing further complicates the issue.

The book is too short and attempts too much to provide any satisfactory analysis or overview. The four page conclusion is disappointing and inconclusive. Thus we are told: 'Distances in Africa are so vast that a theoretically strategic highway – such as the projected Trans-Africa Highway – may in practice turn out to be nothing of the sort'. Or, 'Maybe the "pole" attractions of Nigeria and Kenya as the most sophisticated markets along the axis of the Trans-Africa Highway will help make the dream become a working reality'. Admittedly, these quotations are taken out of context but they do indicate the lack of depth of the study.

The last sentences of the book also exemplify its level and scope. 'Military strategy, economic development, aspirations towards greater unity or the simple encouragement of more cultural exchanges are all mixed up with the pattern of a country's communications with its neighbours; no area of the world demonstrates all these aspects of communications so clearly or with so many exciting if dangerous possibilities as Africa in the middle of the 1970s.'

This is a useful reference book, but given the interest of the subject it is a disappointment in any other terms.

DESMOND MCNEILL

Rich and Poor Countries, HANS W. SINGER and JAVED A. ANSARI; *George Allen & Unwin,* 1977; pp 228; £6.50 hardback, £2.95 paperback.

In this book, Hans Singer, *doyen* of development economists, collaborates with Javed Ansari to produce a manifesto for the Third World viewpoint. It will help readers to empathize with the range of developing countries' demands which are

being tabled, with growing frequency and stridency, at UNCTAD, the North-South Dialogue, and wherever countries meet to discuss the New International Economic Order (NIEO). Its tone is committed, assertive, and polemical.

It is, however, not strictly a textbook, let alone the 'new kind of development economics textbook' claimed on the cover. The main reason for this is that two different kinds of readers are being catered for: 'it has been written specifically to be useful to the general reader as well as to second- and third-year undergraduates.' Note, incidentally, the implication that the layman knows as much about the subject as the final-year economics student. A dangerous trade secret to let out.

A textbook should at least examine basic concepts, be careful about definitions, avoid presuppositions, separate value judgements from logical conclusions, identify different points of view, and aim at some rigour in analysis. All this could be trying for the 'general reader', and one can understand the temptation to be lively, readable and controversial (the book is all these). But there are a disturbing number of places where viewpoints masquerade as axioms, where tract and textbook fuse.

A few blatant lapses of scholarship can be mentioned: 'For the mass of humanity science has probably brought more trouble than gain' (p 207). (This is admittedly a quotation, but one reproduced without comment, to conclude a discussion). Again, 'per capita output (grew) at about 0.09 per cent per annum in the period AD 1 to AD 1850.' (p 32). Or, a comment on the World Food Conference, 'action on the scale required to prevent the *impending starvation catastrophe* was not decisively taken' (my underlining. There is no acknowledgement of the weighty opposing school of thought on this.)

As a description of the whole interface along which developed and developing countries interact, the book overplays the role of aid (three chapters) compared to other forms of capital transfer. Euro-currency loans, export credits and bonds collectively dwarf aid as a source of foreign exchange support. Nor is there any recognition of the massive importance of workers' remittances to developing countries' foreign balances (there are many countries for which this item rivals visible exports as a source of foreign exchange).

The trade sections form the heart of the book, and the case against the existing international trading regime and in favour of improved access for developing countries' products into world markets at higher prices, yielding more stable revenue, is familiar by now, but nonetheless forcefully made. What is not clearly brought out is the differential extent that the various kinds of developing countries can expect to gain and lose from the NIEO package of trade measures. (For example, the richer developing countries will benefit from buffer stocks of metals, while the poorer food importers will lose from higher prices for grains.)

The authors regard the 'technological gap' as the central feature of relations governing developed and developing countries. It is responsible for unequal exchanges between them. The multinational corporation perpetuates it. It must be bridged

by a massive commitment of scientific and technological resources in the service of developing countries' interests, and the multinations must be controlled and harnessed for this task. One must query the descriptive and explanatory power of such a vague concept. Does 'technological gap' tell us anything at all about the difference between the USA and Chad? Can a transfer confined to 'technology' do anything to help Chad? Surely know-how is not the binding constraint, and the multinationals are neither responsible for, nor in a position to help, Chad's plight.

How far does the multinational respond to differences of opportunity in the developing countries it invests in, and how far does it create these differences? The ambivalence towards this universal bogyman that informs this book reminds one of the remark made by Joan Robinson, 'the one thing worse than being exploited by a multinational company is *not* being exploited by one.'

The multinationals, as the book shows, invest overwhelmingly in the larger, semi-industrialised developing countries (who are, hardly by coincidence, better able to cope with them and get the best out of their investment.) The far more numerous poor countries, largely untouched by the multinationals, might be more interested in a discussion of the real reasons for their poverty (which might include such unglamorous and apolitical factors as overgrazing, pressure on land and deforestation). As for the countries with 'multinational problems', an analysis of the realistic limits on their bargaining ability would seem to be a preliminary to the discussion of possible coercive measures on pages 210 onwards. It is symptomatic of the treatment of this topic that different schools of economic thought about multinationals are epitomised as 'Right' and 'Left' on page 201, as if this were a useful shorthand.

The book is pervaded by concern about inequality – between as well as within countries. At one point (p 210) the multinationals are berated for tending to increase inequalities within the less developed country 'and therefore to deter the development of the economy'. Inequality is, of course, an abstraction of little interest to a poor person in a region of widespread poverty, and of little intellectual respectability in countries where data on the national income and its distribution are weak. The person who gives one peasant a steel plough in an area where wooden ones are prevalent is increasing inequality, but is this really important information? The relief of absolute poverty is surely the prime criterion of any policy and one looks forward to a textbook that reviews and assesses development policies and performance from the grassroots viewpoint. This book is not one of them: for all its insights and stimulation to further thought, in the last resort it offers a set of preconceptions which get in the way of a realistic assessment of how policies, relations and institutions affect the poor.

J. T. WINPENNY

Common Efforts in the Development of Rural Sarawak, Malaysia, B. G. GRIJPSTRA; *Van Gorcum & Co,* 1976; pp 231; Dfl 49.50.

The purpose of Mr Grijpstra's research in Sarawak was to try to assess 'in what type of villages cooperative development projects are successful.' (p 157). This has

involved him in much theoretical agonizing, detailed statistical analysis of survey data, and a great deal of useful description. If his conclusions add little or nothing to what we already know or may have guessed about local responses to rural development efforts, we can hardly accuse Mr Grijpstra of not trying hard enough.

This study is predicated on a resoundingly functionalist view of society. Mr Grijpstra is concerned with village integration and disintegration, one of sociology's oldest and most elusive topics. With admirable bravery he sets out to define and measure the integration of Bidayuh Land Dyak villages, evoking a battery of other authors and arguments and scrutinising his own detailed survey data. From the outset, when it is concerned with 'operationalizing the variable integration' (p 14), the argument is afflicted by vague definitions and very relative distinctions. The Bidayuh were, until recently, 'rather equal' (p 140) and 'rather uniform (p 141), as well as 'rather primitive' (p 152). As with most other functionalist views of 'the traditional community', Grijpstra's reckoning of 'habitual integration' is based on dubious presuppositions of *homogeneity* and *equality*. Change is construed as a departure from this state, which is recognised in terms of 'coordination in interaction', 'convergency in ideas and opinions' and 'congruency in mutual feelings' (p 14). As Grijpstra would doubtless recognise, whether or not Bidayuh communities were homogeneous and egalitarian in the past is now largely unascertainable and certainly unmeasurable. Precisely when the Bidayuh, who live within easy reach of the state capital Kuching, lost their 'traditional' isolation as small-scale subsistence communities is largely a matter of conjecture. Grijpstra's principal conceptual invention is a distinction between a kind of passive ('habitual') integration and one which is dynamic – and 'action-oriented integration' (p 142) which depends primarily on a lively and innovative leadership. It is in this phase that the village is apparently receptive to new, government directed rural development efforts.

A central problem which confronts Grijpstra's argument is his own recognition of the fact that cooperatives and other institutions of development are in themselves destructive of village integration, whether of the active or passive variety. They accentuate individual interests, create inequality and 'heterogenize' social sentiments and ways of acting. Recognition of this makes further argument very elusive, if not nugatory. Grijpstra is obliged to conclude that government authorities cannot make sustained use of 'solidarity movements' ('action-oriented integration') in villages, because their interaction is inevitably destructive of that solidarity (p 152). This impasse is symptomatic of a dilemma in which social scientists of the younger generation now find themselves; they are torn between functional views of 'modernization' and development on the one hand, and Marxist views of history and change on the other. Grijpstra's view of the homogeneity of ideas and action in the small community runs against a different view to which he also appears sympathetic, namely that conflict is the spice of life in every village and is the way in which social change is transacted. He tries to accommodate these two views in his concept of 'action-oriented integration', but is obliged to recognise that this is a very ephemeral phase in the history of the village which provides the development specialist with very little constructive opportunity.

Grijpstra seeks an escape from this intellectual dilemma in statistical abstraction. Although at times he allows empirical good sense to become buried in numbers it is a tribute to the care and honesty with which he works that he is obliged eventually to conclude that his statistics have told him little. The hypothesis that 'in villages with a high degree of integration more cooperative development projects are implemented than disintegrated villages' (p 157) is not proven, nor is it possible to identify by any clearly recognisable indices villages in an 'action-oriented' rather than a 'habitual' phase of integration. The survey indicates something we may have guessed already: neither social sameness nor social differentiation is, *per se*, a precondition for the acceptance of exotic ideas and practices. Grijpstra apologises for his data by saying that 'a single survey is not adequate to analyse an on-going process' (p 158). Here again he seems to regret his commitment to a synchronic, functional framework and wishes it could say something of historical significance.

Inevitably, the practical advice which Grijpstra extracts from all this is weak. His focus was on villages and this obliges him to find his remedies within the 'system' of village social relations. Without giving any cogent reasons he argues that if village integration is to be vouchsafed, development efforts must likewise be 'integrated'. This extends the ambiguous interpretation of integration and conflict into the role of the community development agent; on the one hand, he has to tantalise villagers with the prospect of 'individual profit and improvement' while on the other he has to guard against 'allowing too great inequality to develop suddenly in a village' (p 153). To cope with this he must be omniscient, omnipotent and a very super person: 'in the recruitment of community development workers it is necessary to select them on the social skills they have acquired by trial and error. A training in human relations is essential in the education for this position' (p 154). If this is true, then sociology should abdicate its practical role in development in favour of Dale Carnegie and others who profess skills in the development of social personality. More important, the conclusion that planned development depends essentially on initiatives 'from below' is at odds with the task Grijpstra sets himself in his introduction. If rural development is about history, ideology, budgeting, planning, political transaction and administration, then his final remarks are very myopic indeed.

However, the bulk of Grijpstra's book is devoted not to sociological agonies, but to clear and straightforward descriptions of development in Malaysia, in Sarawak, and among the Land Dyak. These will undoubtedly be of value and assistance to all who are interested in and concerned about the future of this region.

A. F. ROBERTSON

The Prefect in French Public Administration, HOWARD MACHIN; *Croom Helm, London,* 1977; pp 210; £8.95.

Generalist officers working in the field administration, whatever they may be called – governor, prefect, district officer – usually find interest in reading about others who are serving in their sort of post. It is extraordinary how closely the

prefectoral function in one country resembles that in all the others; the unusual combination of political work with a civil service appointment throws up many of the same problems even if the environments are very different.

So it is that we always turn with fascination to the latest news from France, where the system is established in a sophisticated industrial country of the West, and stands in some senses as the archetype of all the others. Brian Chapman's *The Prefects and Provincial France*, published in 1955, has long been the basic text in English on the subject, and even now it is rather being up-dated than replaced by the present book. Howard Machin assumes that the reader has a certain knowledge of the system, and tells how it has developed during the years 1959 to 1975. We are reassured to learn that, with all the expansion and institutional reform brought by the Fifth Republic, the older France is still there. Autocracy continues to struggle with anarchy over the body of the prefecture, and the result is a reasonably happy and democratic compromise, though it has nothing Cartesian about it.

The Fifth Republic government, convinced like many of its predecessors of the need for a strong field administration as the arm of the central executive, has made repeated attempts to bring this about by reforming the prefectoral structure and its powers. Nearly all of these attempts were undermined by conflicts between the Ministries in Paris, even before they came up against the massive resistance of persons and institutions at the local level: elected notables, the officers of technical services, large-town mayors, and sometimes the Prefects themselves. As with the other proposed reforms, involving regional government and communal government, an apparently radical approach led in the end to only limited changes in the existing system. Perhaps in the last resort the will was lacking; the government wanted more effective communes (but not at the expense of alienating large parts of the electorate) and it wanted regional authorities (but without doing anything to encourage regional separatism). In the circumstances of a changing society, oriented to mass consumption and increasingly mobile, a much more determined strategy was needed. But de Gaulle personally had little grasp of the mechanics of administrative reform, or economic planning, or regionalism. These were subjects that did not interest him particularly, once the ideals and aims of policy had been stated.

Howard Machin is sensitive to the influence of history, and emphasizes that the Prefects have never been as powerful as the mythology suggested – at least since 1871. Under the Third Republic they were supplanted by the Deputies as the main source of local patronage, and also lost a good part of their direct control over local government. Their powers were further eroded by the increase of professional officers in the field, and the creation of *Sociétés d'Economie Mixte* to take over some quasi-administrative functions. I feel a certain doubt about the argument at pages 26 and 29; if nineteenth-century Prefects did not effectively implement the government's policies of repression, this does not necessarily prove that they were weak and inefficient. Perhaps the main reason is that they were more concerned – rather naturally – with their own survival than with that of the government.

A little more nit-picking, while we are on the subject. At the bottom of page 41 it is found 'paradoxical' that peasant protests about unfair treatment should be

received by the very government representatives who were charged with suppressing any civil disorder by the protesters. But there is nothing paradoxical in combining these activities under a paternalist government – governors and political officers have been doing it throughout the world, ever since the earliest empires of the East.

However these are very minor criticisms. The book is scholarly and packed with information. It goes into great detail over the wider-area institutions that were set up during the 1960s mainly for the purpose of economic planning and coordination. The involvement of Prefects in the administrative 'regional missions' and the economic development commissions (CODER) is well treated. The author has a strong sense of the continuity of problems which persisted as the institutions were re-structured; local jealousies, the clash of authority between generalists and technical officials, the Prefect's overriding motive of avoiding conflict within his Department. The balance of power between himself and the local politicians has in the end been little affected by the experience of the Fifth Republic.

Some of the qualities and limitations of a doctoral thesis occasionally make themselves felt. In providing a very complete account of the events of a short period, the author cannot altogether avoid repeating himself in successive chapters: an aspect which is briefly summarized at one point may reappear in great detail a little later. A section on 'the context and conditions of the prefectoral administration' must to some extent overlap the one on 'the work of the Prefects', which in turn covers some of the material later described under 'the Prefects and their collaborators in local government'. So the book can be hard going in places unless you are a student of its special subject. With all this, it is unique in its field and essential reading for an up-to-date view of the Prefects.

PHILIP MAWHOOD

The Indian Prime Minister: Office and Powers, L. N. SHARMA; *Macmillan,* 1976; pp 207; Rs 55.00.

The proclamation of Emergency by Mrs Indira Gandhi on June 26, 1975 created a great controversy and debate in the Western press about the prospects of democracy in India. Announcement of elections to Parliament by Mrs Gandhi has further raised many issues in the minds of Western observers of the Indian scene. Would the Prime Minister emerge more powerful after the elections of March, 1977? In a way, the Western commentator is uncertain about India.

What are the sources of the Prime Minister's powers in India? How has this office evolved during the last 30 years? What has been the contribution of each incumbent to the status of the Prime Minister's office? What are the linkages between Prime Minister and other institutions of power in society? What have been the strategies of the three Indian Prime Ministers in relation to the state governments in a federal set-up?

Sharma's book is concerned with such questions and he focuses his attention on the dynamics of party politics in India and the role of the Prime Minister as leader of the party and the government.

Sharma describes his story very competently and brings out, in detail, the relationship between Prime Minister and other political institutions like Parliament, Cabinet and party. In India, the Prime Minister's position depends on his or her hold on the party. Mrs Gandhi had a series of struggles with her party colleagues, which ended in 'split' of the Congress party in 1969. She established her pre-eminent position in the country by winning legitimacy from the people. She went beyond the party and by winning elections on the basis of her own appeal, emerged as a very strong political leader in India. While Sharma compares the Indian and the British Prime Minister, he does not bring into sharp focus the points of difference in the two political systems. The Indian Prime Minister functions as leader of a party which is extremely functional and indisciplined. In Britain, the Prime Minister's writ runs on the party. Further, the federal nature of Indian policy compels the Indian Prime Minister to reconcile various regional demands and pressures. The basic difference between the British and the Indian system is that while the political institutions in the former are well-established and predictable in behaviour, in the latter, the institutions are in the process of evolution. Hence Sharma's comparisons are at a formal level. The dynamics of comparison is missing.

Sharma has written a very competent and relevant study on the office of the Prime Minister, which has become the focal point of the Indian political scene. Sharma's book should be very widely read, particularly with a general election now in sight and certain to revolve Mrs Gandhi's personal position.

Finally, all over the world, the powers of the Executive are in the ascendency. The Forty-Second Amendment to the Indian Constitution (1977) (which is not covered by Sharma) legalises the pre-eminent position of the Prime Minister vis-à-vis the President and the Council of Ministers. Under this Amendment, the President is bound to follow the advice of the Council of Ministers. In the Indian federal arrangement, Central government is the centre of power; the fulcrum point is occupied by the Prime Minister who leads the nation with the help of a complex web of politics, and the complete administrative, institutional agreement. Established since independence.

Mrs Gandhi in her numerous public statements has underlined this theme that India needs political stability, strong central government and an effective Prime Minister. According to Mrs Gandhi what is at stake in India is the leadership of the Prime Minister, and the future will decide just what it is that the people of India want.

C. P. BHAMBHRI

Oman – The Making of a Modern State, JOHN TOWNSEND; *Croom Helm, London;* £7.95.

Oman is quite unique because its development has been greatly telescoped by special circumstances. It became an oil producing country as late as 1967; it has already reached its peak production, and reliable estimates suggest that this will be halved in five years time. For the new generation of Omanis, living at the end of the

century, oil production will have ceased. The recent changes in Oman are described by Mr Townsend as astonishing; for a foreigner visiting Oman in 1970: 'His journey would have involved a perilous landing on a small airstrip surrounded by scraggy mountain peaks, his trips around the country would have been by Land Rover on dusty and rough natural surface roads, his accommodation would have been as a guest in a private house.' However, in 1976, '. . . he would have landed at a well-designed and constructed international airport, he would have been driven in an air-conditioned car on a well-made dual carriageway to a modern first-class hotel.' He continues, 'In 1976, especially in the Muscat area and in Salalah, he could be forgiven for thinking he found himself in the middle of a builder's yard. . . .'

The author writes with the authority of someone who has been involved at first hand with the development of modern Oman. He pursues an analytical and critical approach, and has done some research in the field; although he seems to have been limited in his contacts to a certain circle of Omanis and expatriates. His references to the rights of Omani women seem to lack insight; similarly his criticism of the Sultan for lack of enthusiasm for the 'abolition of slavery' is based on a western interpretation of the term; in some ways many people are slaves to their jobs.

In the field of government, the author includes accounts of very interesting anecdotes and situations, not uncommon in developing countries. He describes the dramatic change from the regime of the recluse Sultan Said bin Taimur who '. . . elected to live his whole life in Salalah from 1958. Apart from a few visits to London, made with great secrecy and with the courtesy of the British Royal Air Force, he never left Dhofar'. Under Sultan Qaboos, however, Oman was to join the Arab League and the United Nations, but not OPEC, and the Sultan has been '. . . feted by the Shah of Iran, honoured by the President of France, decorated by the Queen of England, welcomed by the President of the United States'.

The criticism of the judiciary system, linked as it is with the Islamic faith, is controversial; as in the case of many Islamic countries, the system need not be abandoned, but it may be interpreted to suit present needs. In the field of planning, Mr Townsend was confronted with the quote, '. . . the future is in the hands of Allah'. Though he found it difficult to accept, it is necessary to understand the fundamental philosophy of 'Allah Karim', God is generous. Despite the many hardships in the Arab world, and predictions of doom for the large populations of countries like Egypt, famine is rare; the social and religious system encourages another important attribute, that of sharing, particularly with the needy. No doubt, judicious planning for the future is vital, as the author has indicated in his arguments and re-iterated.

The large 'commissions' obtained by Omanis in office, affront the author, who expresses great astonishment at the fact that it takes place with the knowledge of the authorities, and that this does not seem to offend Omani sensibilities. In fact the oil concessions are awarded by the Sultan and not the Sultanate of Oman; payments for oil are made into the account of the Sultan who then transfers sums to the treasury.

This system tends to encourage the commission practices on a lower scale. A certain patronising manner is detectable in the book which could eclipse some of the author's sound arguments; he tends to recognise this in expatriates, who were guilty of an arrogant 'playing at God'; yet an element of that is detectable in the conflicts regarding the defence expenditure and to a lesser degree in discussing the de-salinisation plant and the natural gas proposals.

A few photographic illustrations would have been useful and illuminating; also a comment must be made about the unusual number of printing errors, which seem to be particularly unfortunate in causing some confusion at times, i.e. wali and wadi, being governor and valley and Imam being often spelt Iman.

The book would be of equal interest to those wanting a basic reference about modern Oman as well as to planners and administrators working in other developing countries; it can be enjoyed by the general reader, whereas the professional would find certain parts quite stimulating.

S. M. ROMAYA

Book Notes

1. The Metroville Water Supply Exercise

D. PASTEUR

pp 33; £0.50

2. Urban Services

C. J. DAVIES

Select bibliography; pp 130; £1.25

3. Problems in Urban Management

C. J. DAVIES

Bibliography; pp 115; £1.00

Published by the *Development Administration Group in the Institute of Local Government Studies at Birmingham University.*

These are the first three volumes in a series of case studies in development administration which received financial support from the Ministry of Overseas Development.

Much the best study is that of David Pasteur who presents as a teaching aid the admirable case of a large scale project at 'Metroville' the capital of 'Inlogovia' – seemingly, if not identifiably, a Malaysian situation. A clearly set-out set of circumstances in the context of a major water supply lead up to eight questions for student-answers, so worded as to minimize prevarication. The whole study is backed by a plan showing alternative schemes, critical path networks and lecturers' notes. This study should provide valuable teaching material for a long time to come.

Urban Services by C. J. Davies covers a wide field very skilfully; but the studies suffer from two disadvantages: (a) the adaptation of a very old-fashioned and out-dated attitude towards urban activities and a very conventional view of urban redevelopment and (b) the necessity for posing to students for discussion and decision-making recommendations, such major topics as a computer system based on no more than a few pages of text – well as that text has been prepared it is nevertheless quite inadequate for any serious consideration in depth.

Problems in Urban Management also by C. J. Davies, jointly with N. W. Norris for the best chapter – on urban finances, provides plenty of material upon which practitioner - students can review the needs of 'Sengo Bay' town. The first chapter, on Management Organisation, dealing with a Metropolitan District, while well prepared, offers inevitably too little data on which to assess how well the 'real' consultants did their job; all too easy a way out could be to support the conclusion provided, with no warning provided of the dangers inherent in Parkinsonian expansion.

African Perspectives – Religious Innovation in Modern African Society

W. M. J. VAN BINSBERGEN and R. BUIJTENHUIJS (Eds.) *Africa Study Centre, Leiden, The Netherlands*

pp 148; D fl. 13.00.

This volume contains eight contributions – two of them in French – relating to 'independent' African religious movements from the Mahdists of the 1880s to the Lumpa of post-independence Zambia. The editor's introduction and two other studies are of a general and theoretical nature and one is a short review article about five recent publications.

One's general impression is that of academics with a rather narrow view of their own specialist interests making rather more out of their subject and their theories thereabout than are really warranted. New churches most often under a charismatic leader regularly spring up all round the world – given minimal original

political tolerance, and as often as not fade away when the leader dies. To all intents and purposes the Mahdi was a Muslim prophet who proselytised with the sword and made such a mark that his heirs within the fold of Islam became powerful political leaders until they lost power in the struggle for control of independent Sudan. But this was never an *African* movement *per se*, it was an off-shoot of the Arab world of Islam, in Africa geographically but not surely philosophically, and Mahdist influence in South Sudan was very brief.

The study of perhaps the greatest interest is the sad one of the Lumpa. But they cannot really be studied in isolation from the Watchtower movement which faced similar difficulties with the independent Malawi government, and an overall picture of miscellaneous Christian churches in neighbouring Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania (where Rungwe at independence had a dozen or so 'churches', some 'established' some 'independent'). Is not this problem similar to that of the British Israelites? A newly independent government with a strong nationalist party will inevitably look askance at a 'church' which interprets giving unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's rather differently from the accepted and official government interpretation.

The Indian Political Parties

B. B. MISRA *Oxford University Press*

Bibliography and index; pp 665; £11.50.

This very well written history could suitably have been subtitled 'Prelude to Independence'. B. B. Misra provides a succinctly told background leading up to 1905 and dealing with the Institutional and social structure within which Indian political parties developed. The next fifteen years see: the steady growth of nationalism; and then with the First World War ended, the growth of mass involvement in politics spreading throughout the sub-continent; the opportunity seized during World War II, with Britain against the wall and the Japanese advancing through Burma into India, to hasten the tempo of nationalist demand and the furtherance of the 'Quit India' movement. Nonetheless the masses as a whole did not push very vigorously and the very small number of civilian expatriate personnel and a small military force – not engaged against the Japanese – survived the war with Imperial power still ensconced (rather weary and a bit weak, but Wavell in control) – when Atlee's high-powered Mission initiated the final policy steps for Independence and, alas, disunion which Mountbatten successfully implemented, though the Punjab witnessed a grim period of communal violence to temper the satisfaction of full independence. The penultimate chapter is aptly called 'Power Politics and Partition' – the main story which B. B. Misra tells.

This all makes excellent history of considerable interest to the general reader besides providing an invaluable, objective well structured story of political development for student and researcher alike.

Violence and Politics in Jamaica, 1960-70

TERRY LACEY *Manchester University Press*, 1977

Index; pp 181; £8.50.

Dr Lacey has delved deeply into the sixties – a decade of political and economic frustration in Jamaica. He sees the only hope for the future in rural self-sufficiency and limited labour-intensive industry. The violence and its related internal security cannot be effectively brought under control until agriculture is diversified and rural jobs created in very large numbers – and the people mobilised for this purpose. The book closes when the level of inter-party political violence was falling – only, of course, to rise again in the mid-seventies and to fall once more after Michael Manley's election triumph in 1976.

East African Societies

AYLWARD SHORTER *Routledge and Kegan Paul, London*

With maps, bibliography and index; pp 155.

Here is a simple, pleasantly written introduction to East African people. A little history, three short case studies – one in each of the three countries forming the E.A. Community, and diverse facets of sociological interest, combine to make up the sort of book which should encourage student and general reader to whom East Africa is as yet new, to explore further into the literature of this part of the Continent.

Aylward Shorter lets the facts he gives, speak for themselves and it is indeed a relief to read a book about Africa without being burdened with personal opinions.

Intergovernmental Relations and the Development of Australian Housing Policies

CEDRIC PUGH *Centre for Research on Federal Relations – The Australian National University, Canberra*, 1976

Bibliography; pp 119.

In 1973 Australia's 3 million square miles held a population exceeding 13 million, nearly 5.5m of whom lived in Sydney and Melbourne, and overall close on 75% of all the people were city dwellers – and the urban population has continued to increase in the past four years. So, despite great open spaces, Australia is one of the world's most urbanised countries – one into which, until very recently, more and more immigrants pound annually to add pressure to the urban housing problems of Federal, State and Municipal authorities.

Cedric Pugh in this short research study provides an admirable historical survey of Australian housing, the development of Commonwealth State housing, and overt housing policies which have evolved, in particular since the Second World War. His study is brought right up to date with discussion on the philosophy effecting housing theory and practice and the progress towards social equity and housing reforms as Australia moves towards comprehensive housing policies, albeit these may well be attenuated by political and administrative factors.

Canada and the Transition to Commonwealth

PHILIP G. WIGLEY *Cambridge University Press*

Bibliography and index; pp 294; £12.50.

The 'old' Commonwealth countries moved slowly to equal partnership status with Britain. Canada, the first 'dominion' leading the way ever since the days of the Durham Report. In this volume Philip Wigley examines the final decade – from 1917 to 1926 – when Colonial Office responsibility gave way to a newly created Dominions Office through which Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa conducted their business with Britain until, in turn, that department was replaced by the Commonwealth Relations Office after the Second World War.

The powerful and purposeful figure of Canada's Mackenzie King is seen here, with steady persistence progressing towards full equality with Britain and resenting any real or imaginary disturbance on his chosen path. Whitehall for its part seemed scarcely to realise what was afoot and believed that ties remained when they had already clearly parted.

It is of particular interest to find the Irish Free State participating in the Imperial Conferences of those days, and one's mind turns from Canada now facing its dangers of disunion, to the unhappy doctrinaire decision of de Valera when he opted out of the embryo Commonwealth, thereby destroying the otherwise excellent chance of the reunification of Ireland within his own lifetime – instead we have the grim story of the Seventies.

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